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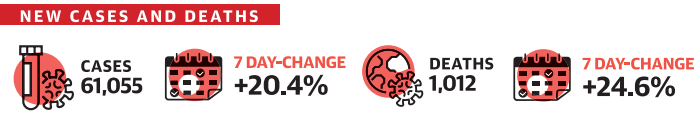


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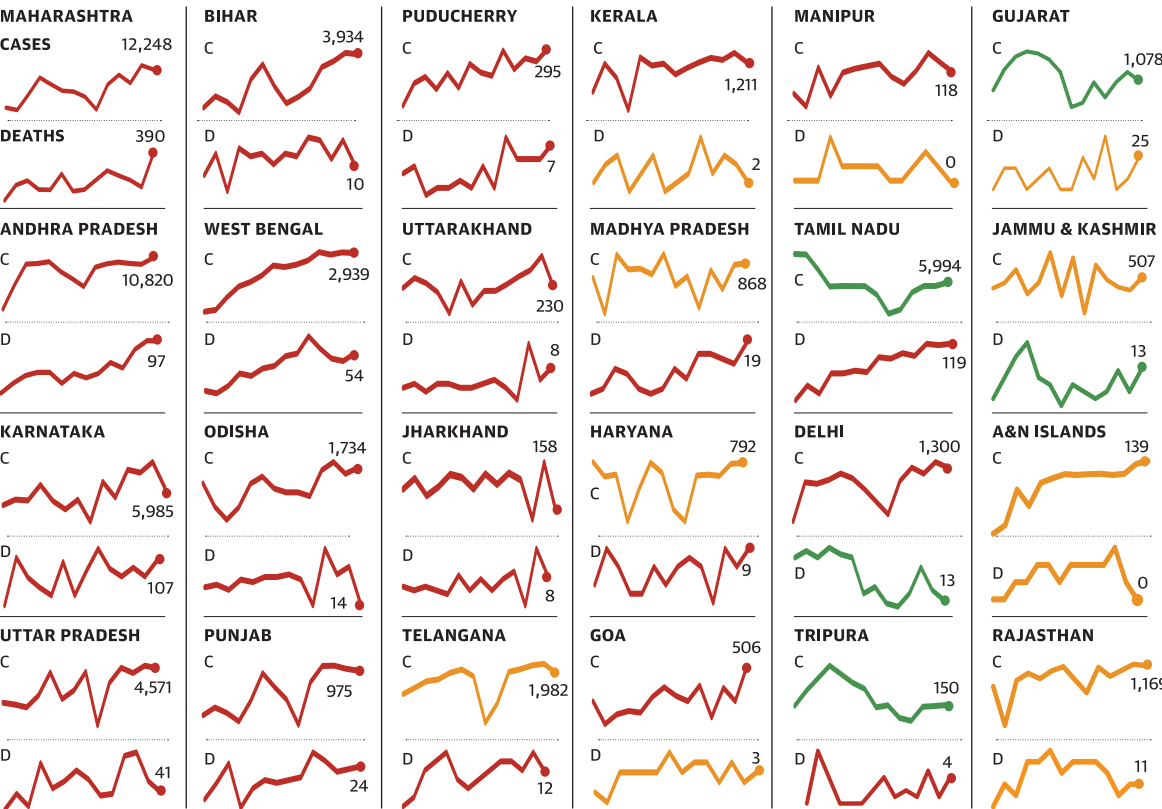
# UNRELENTING RISE

COVID-19 cases in India are growing at the fastest pace in the world and the country's case tally in August is the highest. Among the States, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh recorded around 10,000 infections daily on average in the last week. By **Naresh Singaravelu and Sumant Sen**

**Viral tracker|** With 1,012 deaths recorded on Sunday, India's COVID-19 toll stood at 44,475. As many as 61,055 cases were recorded on the day, taking the tally to 22,13,005. A total of 15,31,788 people have recovered. This data is based on State Health Department releases on Sunday as of 10.30 p.m.

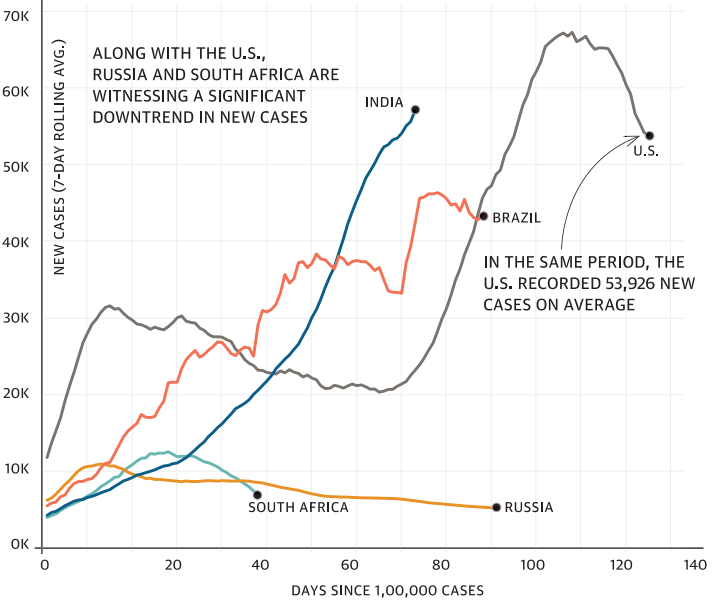


The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases/deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then cases/deaths are rising ■; if they are lower, then, dropping ■; if they are similar, then showing a mixed trend ■ in that State



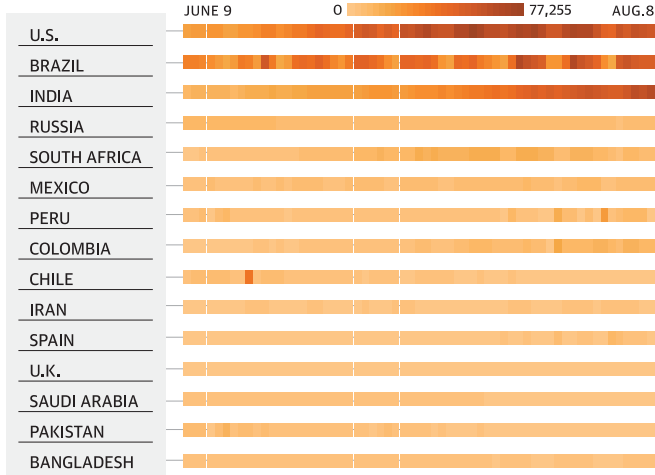
## Exponential growth

The chart shows the seven-day rolling average of new cases recorded in the five countries with the most infections. Cases in India are growing faster than any other country in the world. Between August 2 and August 8, India recorded 57,152 new cases on average



## Where India stands|

The chart shows the number of new cases recorded in the 15 countries with the most infections between June 9 and August 8. Each square represents the number of cases registered on that day. The darker the colour, higher the new cases in the country

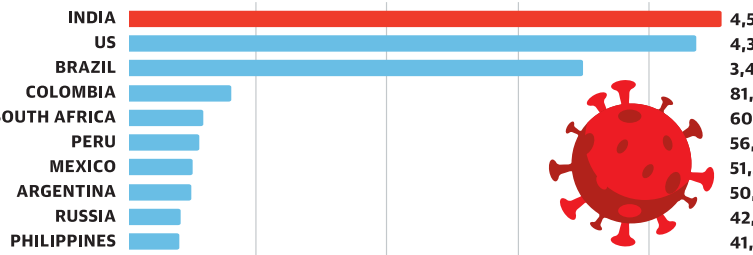


CASES	7-DAY ROLLING AVERAGE OF NEW CASES	DEATHS	7-DAY ROLLING AVERAGE OF DEATHS	TESTS PER MILLION	DOUBLING TIME*
49,97,929	53,926	1,62,423	1,139	1,80,218	60.15
30,12,412	43,505	1,00,477	988	11,933	40.56
21,51,950	57,152	43,463	865	17,805	23.58
8,80,563	5,239	14,827	113	2,05,833	115.16
5,53,188	7,128	10,210	294	53,109	51.79
4,75,902	5,958	52,006	648	7,485	50.83
4,63,875	8,055	20,649	233	11,426	47.63
3,76,870	10,098	12,540	316	32,624	24.1
3,71,023	1,909	10,011	68	92,101	135.67
3,24,692	2,563	18,264	183	30,801	85.29
3,14,362	3,691	28,503	8	99,508	49.31
3,11,461	843	46,651	53	1,50,796	247.57
2,87,262	1,398	3,130	35	1,04,166	139.22
2,83,487	740	6,068	17	9,413	318.91
2,55,113	2,179	3,365	33	7,294	69.11

## Most cases in August

Between August 1 and August 8, India recorded 4,55,330 cases, the highest in the world. The U.S. recorded the second-highest infections in the same period (4,35,891)

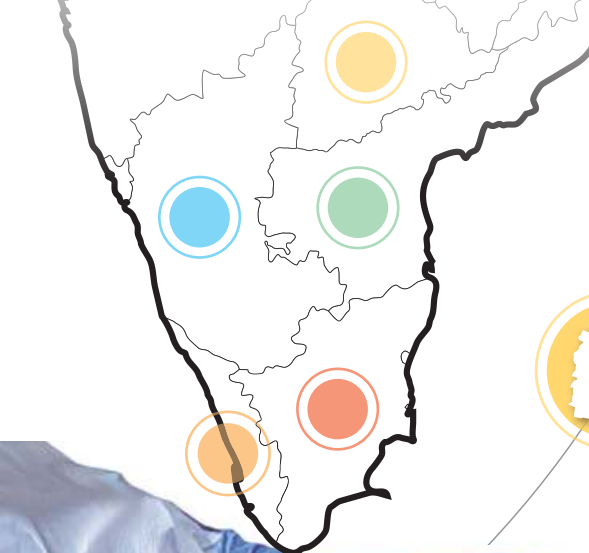
Source: Johns Hopkins University, Our World in Data. \*Days taken for cases to double in last seven days



## When COVID-19 forced governments to step up

With the pandemic bringing unprecedented hard times for the people, governments have had to step up and do much more than they would normally deliver. With much of normal life disrupted due to lockdowns that were imposed with the idea of slowing the transmission of the virus, this intervention from the state became necessary. The governments also had to upgrade health infrastructure in their States, as it soon became obvious that the existing health facilities were going to be woefully inadequate.

Here is a look at what the governments of the southern states – Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana – did in order to be of service to the people during the continuing reign of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This list is not exhaustive; there are multiple schemes being evolved to cater to the emergency situations that arise from time to time.



### TAMIL NADU

- Free rations (rice and other commodities from April to July/additional rice only until November) to card holders, migrant workers, those outside PDS network & NGOs
- Provision of free meals through Amma Canteens
- Quarantine Allowance or cash support ₹1,000 - ration cardholders and members of welfare boards such as construction workers & barbers
- Directive to private schools on payment of fees during 2020-21
- Deferment of rent payment by tenants to property owners
- Time for payment of electricity bills extended till July 31
- Deferment of payment of property and water taxes (ordered in March for three months)

### KERALA

- Free ration and grocery kits to all ration card holders (88 lakh families) in April and July
- Community kitchens opened by local bodies and Kudumbashree. Food provided free-of-cost to those in home quarantine as well as to the public on call
- All welfare pensions provided in two tranches in April and July. More than 50 lakh beneficiaries across various categories. Allocation of ₹1,000 each through welfare boards to

11 lakh members. One-time payment of ₹1000 to the deserving, who are not part of any pension scheme

- ₹58.5 crores allocated to NORKA (Department for Non Resident Keralites Affairs) for payment of ₹5,000 each to expats who lost jobs or are unable to return to various countries
- Up to 50% reduction in the additional power charge incurred by

### TELANGANA

- The government announced a package of close to ₹2,500 crore for providing free rice and cash to below poverty line families holding the white ration cards. 12 kg rice per head to 87.4 lakh families and a cash component of ₹1,500 each to these families for purchase of other essentials including pulses, for two months – April and May
- Nearly ₹100 crore spent on providing 10 kg rice and ₹500 cash each to the families of migrants who did not possess a BPL card
- In addition, card portability, enabling people to draw their monthly quota of essentials irrespective of their location, had been introduced to provide ease to the BPL families
- Decreed that property owners should not demand rent for three months effective March this year
- Strict warning issued to managements of schools against any attempts to increase fee for the academic year 2020-21

- Solatium for COVID-19 deaths in the case of government employees and involved in government work fighting COVID-19, was ₹50 lakh. Was reduced to ₹25 lakh earlier this month
- Supply of essential commodities for slum residents in more than 1900 neighborhoods in Chennai
- Distribution of cash assistance for street vendors in Chennai
- Distribution of free masks (ongoing scheme)
- Distribution of electronic devices such as mobile phones for poor students of Chennai Corporation schools

### KARNATAKA

- ₹2,272 crore provided as relief for workers of unorganized sector, flower, fruit and vegetable growers, weavers, taxi/ auto drivers, hairdressers, laundrymen, and leather craftsmen
- Under PM Kisan Samman Yojana an additional ₹4,000 each has been provided to 50 lakh farmers
- Fixed charge in electricity bills of small entrepreneurs waived off
- ₹60-cr loan waived off for 23,507 fishermen, especially fisherwomen loans up to ₹50,000 from commercial banks
- Loans worth ₹98-cr from cooperative banks have been waived off benefiting 29,631 weavers
- Financial aid of ₹2,000 each has been provided to handloom weavers
- Adequate food supply and rations at free of cost was ensured for

### MEDICAL FACILITIES

Total no. of testing facilities - 362

- Government - 339
- Private - 23

1) RT-PCR/CBNAAT/TRUENAT testing centres in Telangana

- Government - 16
- Private - 23

2) Rapid Antigen Test centres Govt. - 323

Total number of COVID-19 hospitals in Telangana - 147

- Government hospitals - 56
- Private hospitals - 91

### HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Total no. of testing facilities - 122

- Government - 59
- Private - 63

Total no. of COVID-19 hospitals in Chennai - 47

- Government hospitals - 14
- Private hospitals - 33

Total number of COVID-19 beds in government hospitals in Chennai - 6,120

Total number of COVID-19 beds in private hospitals in Chennai - 3,410

Total number of COVID-19 beds in 25 government medical college hospitals in Tamil Nadu - 28,466

Total number of ventilators in the government sector in the State - 3,775

\*Number of ventilators for COVID-19 - 1,775

Coverage of COVID-19 treatment under CM's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme

(Inputs from T. Ramakrishnan, Serena Josephine M., Dennis S. Jesudasan and Aloysius Xavier Lopez)

### ANDHRA PRADESH

- Free rations (rice and other commodities from April to July/ additional rice only until November) to card holders in eight phases. Rice and other pulses distributed
- Dry ration provided to school students of day scholars and hostels at their door steps
- ₹1000 financial aid provided to all eligible families during lockdown
- Provision of free meals through Amma Canteens
- COVID allowance or cash support ₹2,000 being provided to patients upon recovery
- ₹15,000 financial aid announced for kin of persons who succumb to COVID-19.
- Directive to private schools not to collect fee before the commencement of the new academic year. Managements were also asked to give option for payment of fee in instalments.
- Deferment of rent payment by tenants to property owners

### MEDICAL FACILITIES

Total no. of testing facilities - 74

- Government - 65
- Private - 9

Total no. of COVID-19 hospitals in AP - 138

- Government hospitals - 60
- Private hospitals - 78

Total number of COVID-19 beds in government hospitals in Andhra Pradesh: 38,607

Total number of ICU beds available in COVID-19 hospitals: 4,214

Total number of beds with oxygen supply lines in COVID-19 hospitals: 17,232

Total number of ventilators available in the State - 1,620

Free COVID-19 treatment under Aarogya Sri for card holders in government and private hospitals. (Inputs from Tharun Boda)



SUNALINI MATHEW  
NEW DELHI

If you're confused with all the information about what mask to wear, and how COVID-19 is transmitted in the first place (aerosols? surfaces?), you're like most people who have a dozen masks around the house, with no clarity on what works best. Here, doctors give us some gyan.

Why should I wear a mask when those around me already are?

If you're late to the game, then know that masks fulfil two purposes: they prevent the transmission of the novel coronavirus (and other pathogens – viruses and bacteria) from you (if you have it), via little droplets when you breathe hard, speak, sneeze, cough, or sing. They also prevent the same from other people. Over 120 countries have asked citizens to wear masks in public spaces according to Oxford University's news piece put out in July.

Even if everyone around you is wearing a mask, the World Health Organization (WHO) has not ruled out aerosol transmission in closed settings "particularly in these indoor locations where there are crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where infected persons spend long periods of time with others." Look at them as personal protective equipment if you're going to work in an air-conditioned office with several people, for instance, even if you're keeping a metre-long distance.

What is N95 mask?

The ideal is the respirator mask (N100, N99, N95), designed for poultry cleaning or logging – high virus or dust loaded environments. It was meant to be worn for no longer than eight hours, to protect the wearer.

The N stands for non-oil, meaning an industry can choose this if there is no oil present in the air. There are also R and P masks, where R means oil is present; P is when oil is present.

The number stands for the expectation that the filter will trap 95% particles. So an N95 mask "filters at least 95% of airborne particles but is not resistant to oil," as per the Centers for Disease Control, US. These are certifications provided by Ameri-

They may confuse face-recognition software and cause unknown people to greet you on an evening walk, but face masks are now as necessary as your underwear

ca's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Reputed companies will generally say on their packaging that they are NIOSH certified. Do check this, as there are several fakes in the market.

KN95 are the Chinese equivalent of the N95.

"The salient features of these masks are that they provide a complete seal around the nose and mouth [a gasket fitting that provides no leakage]," says Ambarish Satwik, a vascular and endovascular surgeon in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. "They also work on the mechanism of electrostatic attraction." Here, the filter that is fibrous in nature, attracts oppositely charged particles. The masks come with filters that need to be changed periodically – check the box or manual for instructions.

An N95 once used, must be placed in a breathable paper bag (no plastic lining) and worn on the fifth day, as it is believed that if the virus is present, it dies in that time.

What mask should I wear?

It all depends on the purpose of the mask. "A surgical mask is meant to prevent infection from wearer to people around," says Suresh Munuswamy, Programme Coordinator and Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public Health, in Hyderabad.

These are three-ply, meaning they have three layers. "Make sure the middle layer is a melt blown micro/nano fibre layer, and wear it with the folds between the pleats facing downwards and on the outside, with the nose clip on the nose [if there's one]," says Dr. Satwik, who uses them on his run, because of the breathability (it doesn't cause hypoxia – oxygen deprivation). "As a rule though, it's best not to wear a mask at all when you're running, but then make sure there's no one around."

They are one-time-use and can be used for a prolonged period of time, about 4-6 hours, but never reused. If they are wet



A surgical mask is meant for a one-time use, and it's best to avoid a mask with a slit of vent

will be out on this soon.

What are these anti-viral masks that are being sold?

These are masks that have a finish of an anti-viral coating, based on nano technology (the science of very tiny particles). The finish often uses metals like silver or copper, and have the ability to kill a virus. Most are tested with a range of two to 24 hours, which means the virus will get killed in that time duration. However, if say the kill time is one hour, but you touch your mask before that and then touch your eyes, you are still vulnerable. "These finishes lower the risk, but don't eliminate it," says Prof Ashwini Agrawal, Dept of Textile and Fibre Engineering, IIT-Delhi, who has developed a silver finish that is currently undergoing testing in a lab abroad. "The problem is that there are very few labs in the world doing this testing, and many individuals are fooling companies into believing they are providing these testing facilities," he says.

Can't I just use my dupatta or a handkerchief?

This is not substitute for a mask, because fit is all important in preventing leakage. It's the reason masks with vents are not advisable, as these allow unfiltered air to enter and escape. Also, it's going to touch other surfaces that may have the virus. If you have nothing else and are using the cloth only for this, it's better than nothing at all.

Should my baby be masked?

This is not advisable, because children below the age of four may not be able to communicate what they're feeling. "You can try and explain to a child over four," says Bakul Jayant Parekh, president of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP). If your child cannot tolerate a mask, the IAP recommends "rigorous respiratory hygiene", meaning using a disposable paper tissue which should be thrown away immediately. "The chances of a child passing on the infection to adults is rare, but grandparents are at risk, so the best way is to keep the two apart."

# The latecomer's guide to FACE MASKS

with sweat or moisture, they must be replaced. "Dispose of it by wrapping it in a tissue paper and throwing it in the garbage, if you don't have COVID-19," says Dr. Satwik.

Do remember though that these are plastic derivatives and are adding to environment pollution, so you may want to keep these to the minimum.

Dr. Munuswamy says it isn't necessary for people working from home with limited interaction with other people to wear a respirator mask. "If you're taking care of a family member who has COVID-19 or you're going into a high-risk area, do wear one," says Dr. Satwik.

The third category of masks is cloth that ideally need to be approved by the South India Textile Research Association (SITRA) that offers third-party testing and has a government accredited, NABL-

approved laboratory.

Are these available?

SITRA is not a certification body; only a testing one. Dr. Munuswamy and his team, who have developed a mask, says that companies can opt for a BIS certification, but that is upto the company. Wildcraft Outdoor Protection Masks, for instance, are tested by BIS. Loyal's Supera Shield 4-layer woven mask is SITRA tested and available on Amazon.in. "However, there is no certification organisation as designation by the government, in our country," says Dr. Munuswamy, adding that therefore, if someone comes out with an innovation, there is no body to validate the claim.

I'm asthmatic, and I find it hard to breathe. Can I skip the mask in public?

You'll still have to wear a mask. "I recommend a cloth mask," says Sundeep Salvi, founder-director of the Pulmocare Research and Education Foundation (PURE), Pune. He cites research from the peer-reviewed ACS Publications that offers support for hybrid masks that leverage "mechanical and electrostatic filtering". A high thread count cotton piece with two layers of natural silk or chiffon showed that the filtration efficiency was greater than 80% for particle sizes less than 300 nm, and greater than 90% for particle sizes greater than 300 nm. However, if the mask is not snug, it could lead to leakage upto 50%. The WHO suggests a three-layer mask, where the outer layer is water-resistant, the inner layer water absorbent. "Synthetic fabric or canvas [a natural fabric] for the outer

layer, and material from an old cotton T-shirt on the inside, would be the closest description to this," says Sangeeta Sen, a textile designer, from Delhi.

Dr. Munuswamy, who heads PHFI's HI-Rapid Lab, says that most N95 masks are designed for Caucasian facial features, so in his team's development of a mask for India and Indians, they tweaked the design a little to allow for a broader nose and for the mask to sit slightly away from the face. His mask – a low-cost reusable respirator – has air-intake vents from the sides, with the air being channelled through a matrix. This forces air to bend, and each time the air hits a wall, it deposits some airborne dust and virus particles here, enhancing efficiency and prolonging the role of the replaceable HEPA filter. The mask has been tested in their lab and a research paper

## AAP gears up for civic body elections

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Admi Party's Delhi unit is being reorganised from top to bottom in preparation for the municipal corporation elections, to be held in 2022, said party convener Gopal Rai on Sunday.

Mr. Rai announced appointments of district in-charge, district communications in-charge, and 70 assembly observers. The restructuring has been taking place for the last week and is expected to be completed by August 20, Mr. Rai said, adding that priority was being given to party leaders who had helped out during the Assembly elections and in the pandemic.

In the next phases of the reorganisation, the party will appoint another 70 Assembly in-charge and 272 ward in-charge party members, Mr. Rai said.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	115	Gurgaon	142
Ghaziabad	147	Faridabad	158
Noida	149	Greater Noida	129
Legend: Good (0-50), Satisfactory (51-100), Moderate (101-200), Poor (201-300), Very poor (301-400), Severe (>401)			
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS)   SOURCE: CPCB			

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Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD, East Central Railway/Sonpur PR/511/SEE/ETRD/T/20-21/28

## Facebook needs to review its privacy policy, says HC

Students' photos were lifted from Instagram, posted on porn sites

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Responding to a recent incident where pictures of college students were posted on porn sites after being lifted from photo and video sharing platform Instagram, the Delhi High Court has said that Facebook, which owns Instagram, may need to "review and sharpen" its privacy policy.

Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani said that while no relief may have been sought against Facebook by the victim, who has approached the court for removal of the offending contents from the Internet, the company remains a proper party to the present proceedings.

This, the court said, was necessary for Facebook to "ensure that offending content like the subject matter of the present proceedings does not fall in the hands of wrongdoers". The court's remark came after Facebook said it was "merely a pro-forma party and may accord-



ingly be discharged from this matter" as the offending content has already been removed by Facebook from its platform.

No global policing

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Facebook, said the victim has deactivated her Facebook account and that no relief was sought against Facebook in her petition.

"We operate in 150 countries in the world. So we can't act like a global policemen on every account. We are only a platform," Mr. Rohatgi said, adding that Facebook will remove any content when ordered by the

court without contest.

The victim, a college student in Bangalore, in her complaint filed through advocate Sarthak Maggon stated that her pictures posted on 'Instagram' and 'Facebook', were mischievously and illegally lifted and uploaded on a pornographic website, along with derogatory captions.

DCP, CyPAD, Anyesh Roy had stated in a previous hearing that there are other students in the college, whose personal content has also been illegally reposted, and investigation is also going on in Bangalore.

Mr. Roy had underscored the 'technological impediment' in completely effacing offending content from the World Wide Web.

Justice Bhambhani has decided to enlarge the scope of the petition to evolve a set of steps including "what directions are required to be passed by a court and to which parties", and the measures law enforcement agencies should undertake.

## 'Make adequate arrangements to ensure online teaching does not turn exclusionary'

SFI demands clarity on availability of facilities among DU students

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Students group – SFI – appealed to Delhi University to make adequate arrangements to ensure that online teaching will be undertaken in the new semester does not turn exclusionary.

The group highlighted that open book examinations had already faced severe criticism as there were issues of access,

apart from which online classes that took place during last semester could not be attended by many students.

New approach

While it supported developments in the use of technology for education, the group said it was important for new approaches to be implemented in the interest of all students. In the absence of infras-

tructure facilities such as a stable Internet connection and availability of equipment to all, students from socially and economically backward sections will be at a disadvantage, SFI said.

The group demanded that there must be clarity on the availability of facilities among students and undertake remedial measures before moving ahead with its plans.

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SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

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DP/9244/2020



# AAP claims on virus management absurd: Punjab Health Minister

‘So-called Delhi model nothing but desperate bid to divert attention from failures’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu on Sunday said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was making a laughing stock of itself with its absurd claims on COVID-19 management in the national capital and termed the so-called ‘Delhi model’ nothing more than a desperate bid by the Delhi government to divert attention from its failures.

The Minister, in a statement, described Punjab Leader of the Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema’s statement expressing “dissatisfaction” with the Punjab government’s measures to tackle the pandemic as ridiculous and said the AAP MLA was clearly oblivious to the



Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu.

fact that Punjab continued to fare much better than many other States in the fight against COVID-19, which in fact had totally exposed the inadequate Delhi healthcare infrastructure.

Mr. Sidhu pointed out that the effectiveness of Pun-

jab’s battle against the virus was not on account of any help from the Central government, unlike Delhi where the Centre had to step in and virtually take over the pandemic management to pull the city out of the total and unprecedented mess into to which the AAP government had pushed it.

“The less said about the AAP government’s COVID management in Delhi the better,” said the Minister, pointing out that even now, the Delhi High Court was continuously questioning and, in fact, pulling up the Delhi government over its pandemic strategy.

“What Delhi model is this, which even the High Court is not satisfied with?” he asked, adding that Punjab

remained far ahead of Delhi in terms of effectiveness in COVID-19 management.

## Under HC scanner

“Given that the entire testing strategy of the Delhi government was under the court’s scanner, Mr. Cheema’s insistence on Punjab adopting the same strategy was not just laughable but a clear indication that the AAP was not interested in protecting the people of Punjab,” said Mr. Sidhu.

He said all the AAP had ever cared about was promoting its own interests, which the people of Punjab had seen through back in 2017 itself when they had shattered the party’s dreams of forming the government in the State.

# Rail corridor to put Gurugram on fast track

Proposed line will allow train travel in different directions from Millennium City

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

Set to connect four major radial routes of the Indian Railways from Delhi passing through Haryana, the proposed 121-km-long Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor running along the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway will be the much-needed rail bypass of Delhi, reducing traffic congestion in the Capital, besides making travel possible by train in different directions from the Millennium City.

The four major radial routes of the Indian Railways originating from Delhi to be intersected by the proposed corridor are: Delhi-Palwal-Mathura, Delhi-Rewari-Jaipur-Ahmedabad, Delhi-Roh-tak-Bhatinda and Delhi-Ambala-Chandigarh. “The project will not just provide rail bypass of Delhi, but also connect Gurugram to these radial routes. As of now, Gurugram is located on a unidirectional route from Delhi to Jaipur via Rewari. The orbital corridor will make it possible to travel in different directions viz. Mathura, Bhatinda and Chandigarh from the Millennium City. It will significantly improve the rail connectivity in this region,” said Haryana Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSI-IDC), Managing Director, Dinesh Chand Deshwal.

## ‘Metro-like’ trains

Mr. Deshwal said the railways was also mulling “metro-like” trains on the corridor between Palwal and Sonipat for commuters travelling daily on the route for jobs and business.

The proposed orbital corridor would also be the linchpin of economic growth in NCR connecting the Indian Railways’ Dedicated Freight Corridor at Prithala station and logistics hubs and promoting development of new multi-modal hubs along the periphery of the Capital.

Connecting Palwal to Sonipat via Sohna, Manesar and Kharkhoda, the rail corridor is a broad gauge electrified double railway line for passenger and freight traffic.

Mr. Deshwal said a lot of industrial and township development was expected in the region, especially along the KMP Expressway, and the rail corridor would be

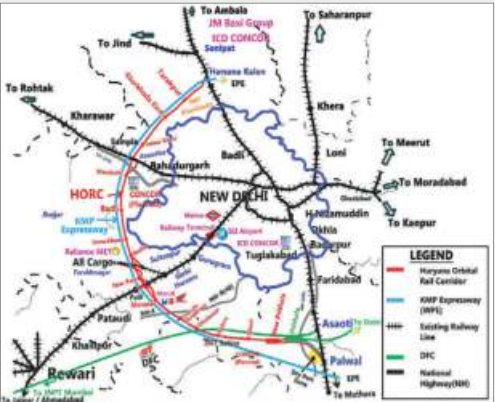
## Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor

### A Snapshot view

- New broad gauge electrified double line
- From Palwal to Sonipat bypassing Delhi via Sohna, Manesar and Kharkhoda
- Length: 121.742 km (143.932 km, including connectivity)
- Project Cost: ₹5617.69 crore
- No of stations: 14 new (3 existing)
- Speed Potential: 160 kmph
- Implementation through public-private partnership

### Project Objectives

- Connecting logistics hubs and promoting development of new multi-modal hubs
- Feeder route connectivity to dedicated freight corridor network
- Connecting four important Indian Railways radial routes
- Reduction in traffic congestion and pollution in Delhi
- Direct connectivity to Gurugram and major Haryana districts
- Peripheral link to industrial growth and new townships around Delhi



### Milestones of the Project

- In-principle approval granted by Ministry of Railways on March 5, 2019
- The DPR approved by BOD of HRIDC on June 25, 2019
- Haryana Cabinet approved the project in a meeting held on July 16, 2019
- Project proposal submitted to Railway Board on July 25, 2019, for clearance from Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
- Expanded Board for Railways has approved the project on October 24, 2019
- Draft Cabinet note, duly approved by Union Minister of Railways and Union Finance Minister, was submitted to Cabinet Secretariat and Prime Minister’s Office on March 6, 2020, for the approval of the CCEA

SOURCE: HARYANA RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

# 18 institutes named after fallen soldiers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

More than seven years after a policy was put in place to name government and aided educational institutions in the State after those killed in a war or anti-insurgency operation to boost the morale of the armed forces, the Palwal district administration has named institutes in an honour to 18 slain soldiers.

The policy to name educational institutes after those killed in Kargil war was framed in 1999 and later extended to those who were awarded national awards, freedom fighters and those killed in other wars, anti-insurgency operations as well in 2013. As per the policy, the Deputy Commissioner could effect the change in the name of the institute following a resolution from Gram Panchayat or a municipal body in this regard.

Deputy Commissioner, Palwal, Naresh Narwal told *The Hindu* that the policy was framed seven years ago, but remained on the papers. “Of the 39 martyrs, it was found that educational institutes were not named after as many as 18. The gram panchayats concerned were then directed to sent the resolutions and the names of the institutes were changed with a single stroke of pen,” said Mr. Narwal.

# Rights panel seeks report from Centre

Pension issue of Bhopal gas survivors

STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

The National Human Rights Commission has sought an action-taken report within four weeks from the Centre and the Madhya Pradesh government on a complaint by Bhopal gas tragedy survivors demanding the monthly pension of ₹1,000 to each widow of victims that was discontinued in December 2019.

The Commission on August 7 directed the complaint filed by the Bhopal Gas Peedith Mahila Udyog Sangathan to be forwarded to Secretary, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers; Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice and the Chief Secretary, Madhya Pradesh government.

The complainant had pointed out that the Union Cabinet in 2010 had approved a recommendation of a Group of Ministers to provide pension to around 5,000 widows. Initially, ₹500 a month was paid and later the amount was in-

creased to ₹1,000 a month by the Centre, for which ₹30 crore had been allocated.

As such, ₹25.43 crore was disbursed as pension to beneficiaries until 2019-2020, the complainant informed the Commission, and ₹4.57 crore was still left with the Centre.

“However, now the hapless widow beneficiaries are being deprived of the pension,” the Commission said in the order.

## Curative petition

Further, the complainant said a curative petition filed by the Centre before the Supreme Court for enhancing the settlement sum by an additional amount of ₹7,728 crore was pending for last 10 years.

“Thus, the widows of thousands of gas victims are forced to live in abysmal conditions because of the inordinate delay in payment of additional compensation,” the Commission noted.

# 24 deaths, 987 new cases in Punjab

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab recorded 987 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday and reported 24 more deaths taking the toll to 586, according to an official statement.

The number of positive cases has reached 23,903. The major chunk of new cases, 316 and 204 were reported from Ludhiana and Patiala districts respectively. The health department said the active cases are 7,998 and 15,319 patients have so far recovered been cured.

**Governor tests negative** Meanwhile Punjab Governor V.P. Singh Badnore has tested negative while J.M. Balamurugan, Principal Secretary to Governor, tested positive and has been home quarantined.

According to the official spokesperson of Punjab Raj Bhawan, a two-day testing exercise was carried out at Raj Bhawan in which 336 people were screened. Besides Mr. Balamurugan, four others also tested positive.

## Protest over pay



ASHA workers staging a protest to demand their pending wages, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ R. V. MOORTHY

# Elderly Naga couple with comorbidities beat COVID-19

Their recovery has given hope in a State where stigma against the infected is high

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The recovery of an elderly Nagaland couple with comorbidities has given a fillip to the State government’s fight against the stigma surrounding the novel coronavirus infection.

Unlike some parts of Nagaland where the infected have been shunned even after recovery, the people of Lasumi village in Phek district bordering Myanmar stood by 93-year-old Tsulo Therie and his 79-year-old wife Zunyi-ii.

The couple’s 10 children,

members of their extended family and neighbours welcomed them back home after their discharge from the District (COVID-19) Hospital in district headquarters Phek.

## ‘Noteworthy recovery’

The hospital’s Medical Superintendent, Dr. Tiala Longkumer said their recovery was noteworthy as Mr. Therie has arthritis and his wife is a diabetic.

“The couple along with one of their sons had tested positive on July 24 and their status was confirmed on July

28 via RT-PCR,” the doctor said.

Another of the couple’s sons had tested positive earlier.

Kute Therie, one of the couple’s sons and a Community Health Officer at a government-run health and wellness centre near Lasumi village, said he was the first in the family to get infected possibly because of his COVID-19 duty.

“It is because of God’s blessings that my parents survived. Besides, they are active and refuse to touch

anything other than traditional Naga food grown organically,” he said.

Mmhnolmo Kikon, an MLA and State spokesperson for COVID-19, saw a ray of hope in the recovery of the elderly couple and the positive attitude of the people of Lasumi.

“The government has run many campaigns for creating awareness through various platforms on stigma associated with COVID-19. However, it is the collective responsibility of everybody to fight this stigma,” he told *The Hindu*.

# Pandemic restrictions put Bhopal sex workers in a bind

They wonder how to keep the virus away yet continue earning

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BHOPAL

Whenever the COVID-19 advisory chimes in on her phone – maintain a distance of at least two yards with others and always wear a facemask – Kajal\* is caught in a bind. A sex worker for eight years, she wonders how to keep the virus away yet continue earning.

“New clients fear if we have the disease, but what about them? Even we fear they might have it,” said Kajal, 38, whose husband, a driver with an LPG gas agency, and daughter, don’t know about her work. At least four clients approached her every day before the pandemic struck, but now even if one came, she considers herself lucky.

## Bleak finances

Nearly 1,500 female sex workers in Bhopal, mostly from low-income families, live with the constant fear of having contracted the illness, given the physical intimacy which characterises their profession. Wages have crashed as apprehensive clients are short of the paying power themselves: the pandemic has snatched jobs and hobbled businesses. And bleak finances at households after the pandemic-induced-lockdown is pushing more and more women, even minor girls, into the work.

Still, to ensure her

**New clients fear if we have the disease, but what about them? Even we fear they might have it**

KAJAL  
Bhopal sex worker

daughter’s schooling continues, Kajal can’t depend entirely on her husband, who makes a mere ₹5,000 a month. Moreover, there is the added burden of paying ₹4,000 rent for a one-room apartment she and three other sex workers have taken. “Several workers have given up such rooms. They now visit the client’s residence which can be unsafe or sit home jobless,” she says.

With no one to guide them through profession-specific precautions, sex workers simply follow those prescribed for the general public.

The lockdown-induced-economic crisis has also pushed tens into sex work in Bhopal. Recently, a 15-year-old girl, responsible for a younger brother after her mother died during the lockdown, took up the profession as working as a domestic help didn’t work, for households are still loath to allow outsiders inside.

“Our work will come back on track only after the pandemic goes away. But people say it is here to stay,” said Manisha\*, 42, whose husband is a contractor.

Whereas Kajal is now desperate to switch to an alternative profession, perhaps opening a boutique, for it will offer a stable income and reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 or STDs and harassment by the police.

“But other professions will require hefty investments. Where will we get money during the pandemic?” she asked.

## Credit from customers

Only regular clients have come to the rescue of the workers during the lockdown. While Kajal received ₹10,000 in advance from a client, who’ll recover the amount later, Manisha too had taken credit from her boyfriend.

“We simply tell our families we work at offices and got the loan from our employers,” said Kajal.

Six-seven sex workers in Bhopal had also tested positive for COVID-19, though not through their profession, said Rajesh Chouhan, project manager, Centre for Advanced Research and Development, an NGO.

“Ensuring safe sex among the workers during the lockdown has been a challenge. But we distributed condoms among workers in bulk earlier,” he said. Of the city’s 1,200 workers registered with the group, around 800-900 were home-based.

\*Names changed

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I, **PARMOD** S/o, Satbir, DOB:19/09/95, P.O. 387, Chamara, P.O.-Mandi Tehsil-Ilsara, Panipat, Pin-132107 have changed my name from Parmod to Parmod Sindher vide Affidavit Number QDE2020H2 dated 05/08/2020.

LOST & FOUND

IT IS notified for the information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate and Marks Statement of Main Senior Secondary Examination of Year 2013 and Roll No. 4675612 issued by CBSE have been actually lost. Name of the candidate– Nitesh, Full Address/Tel– 32/5 Kiran Gulati, Sewak Ashram Road, Chironwali, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Pincode– 248001.

PUBLIC NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Pushpawati Singhania Hospital & Research Institute, Press Enclave Marg, Sheikh Sarai, Phase-II, New Delhi has been accorded with Environmental Clearance vide Ref. No. F. No. 23-134/2019-IA-III (V) dated 31st July 2020 from Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India. The copies of the clearance letters are available with the Ministry of Environment & Forests and can also be seen on their website [parivesh.nic.in](http://parivesh.nic.in)

WEATHER WATCH
RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Delhi, Bihar, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Goa and Andhra Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	35.1	27.3		Kozhikode	54.4	25.8	23.6
Ahmedabad	74.4	29.7	25.6	Kurnool	0.8	31.8	25.0
Aizawl	26.3			Lucknow	0.4	35.4	27.2
Allahabad	15.8	33.9	26.8	Madurai	6.4	33.8	24.5
Bengaluru	6.2	27.0	18.8	Mangaluru	78.2	26.7	23.0
Bhopal	3.8	29.7	24.0	Mumbai	6.2	30.4	26.5
Bhubaneswar	9.5	32.0	25.4	Mysuru	10	26.0	20.3
Chandigarh	34.0	28.9		New Delhi	1	35.0	26.2
Chennai	61.7	35.0	23.6	Patna	0.2	34.0	28.4
Coimbatore	8.5	31.0	21.6	Port Blair	44.9	30.2	23.7
Dehradun	30.0	25.0		Puducherry	16.6	29.2	24.0
Gangtok	26	22.3	19.0	Pune	6	28.4	20.4
Goa	10.8	30.2	25.1	Raipur	2.9	29.2	25.0
Guwahati	12.8	37.4	26.4	Ranchi	0.2	32.0	24.0
Hubballi	26.0	22.0		Shillong	0.6	27.6	19.0
Hyderabad	29.8	23.3		Shimla		26.5	21.2
Imphal	1.8	29.0	23.0	Srinagar	0.6	30.0	20.9
Jaipur	1.2	34.9	25.6	Thiruvananthapuram	7.9	27.0	23.4
Kochi	123	27.2	23.0	Tiruchi	18.1	30.0	23.8
Kohima	25.6			Vijayawada	32.6	29.2	
Kolkata	18.3	33.5	26.7	Visakhapatnam	3	32.4	28.2

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	25	47	37	69	100	Good
Bengaluru	15	20	31	52	100	Good
Chennai	13	86	36	67	100	Good
Delhi	3	13	45	62	132	Good
Hyderabad	32	24	8	36	60	Good
Kolkata	3	65	20	37	100	Good
Lucknow	8	56	55	127	102	Good
Mumbai	14	9	4	18	70	Good
Pune	25	9	44	23	24	Good
Visakhapatnam	17	30	18	48	78	Good

Air Quality Code: 1 Poor 2 Moderate 3 Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO<sub>2</sub>: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO<sub>2</sub>: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

RT-PCR lab to start testing operations in Satara today: Health Minister

Facility will reduce Pune's testing load, generate results faster, says Rajesh Tope

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Expressing concern over the alarming spike in COVID-19 cases in Satara and Kolhapur districts in western Maharashtra, State Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Sunday said a RT-PCR (reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) lab would be started in Satara from Monday.

Addressing reporters in Karad, Mr. Tope said the RT-PCR lab would help reduce the load of testing Satara's samples in Pune and generate results much faster.

"There is an urgent need to increase testing in both Satara and Kolhapur given the drastic surge in new cases. It takes two to three days for the sample results to come in to these two districts. This must change and all results must come within 24 hours of testing a potential case. Once the lab in Satara becomes operational, the pace of detection and sample testing results will quicken as well," he said.

Review meeting

Earlier in the day, Mr. Tope, along with Nationalist Congress Party president Sharad Pawar, took stock of the worsening COVID-19 situation in Satara and Kolhapur at a review meeting, which was attended by Guardian Ministers, elected representatives and senior officials from the two districts.

Mr. Tope said early identification of symptoms would help reduce the case fatality rate and directed officials and medical authorities to test at least 15 contacts of a positive case to break the chain of transmission. The Health Minister also warned private hospitals in the two



Taking stock: Health Minister Rajesh Tope (left) and Nationalist Congress Party president Sharad Pawar address a press conference at Karad in Satara district on Sunday. •PTI

districts of stern action if they refuse to treat suspected COVID-19 patients.

He said, "There have been numerous complaints from people in these districts of private hospitals not admitting people with COVID-19-like symptoms or refusing to treat them. This is very wrong. The district administration has full authority to investigate such cases and book errant hospital staff."

Threat of strict action

Mr. Tope said 45 hospitals in Kolhapur and 27 in Satara are covered under the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana – the State government's flagship health insurance scheme – to provide free treatment to COVID-19 patients. He said these hospitals will face strict action if they are found charging patients.

Satara has been reporting

There is an urgent need to increase testing in both Satara and Kolhapur given the drastic surge in new cases

RAJESH TOPE
State Health Minister

an average surge of 200 cases a day for the past three weeks. In contrast, throughout June, the average single-day rise was less than 60. The surge was lower in May, with the district reporting only 10 cases a day. The district now has over 2,700 active cases and has recorded more than 170 deaths.

Kolhapur's surge has been even more worrying: from an average 20 cases a day in the beginning of July, the district has since been reporting 500 new cases every day for the last fortnight. The district now has more than

5,600 active cases, while its death toll has gone past 250.

The Health Minister also said the State government would soon be procuring 500 ambulances and allotting them to hospitals in the State's rural areas. The Maha Vikas Aghadi government last month belatedly realised the dire scarcity of ambulances in the State's rural hospitals and had released ₹90 crore to purchase them.

10-day lockdown in Beed

Five important towns in Beed district in Marathwada, including Beed city, Parli and Ambejogai, have decided to observe a rigid 10-day lockdown from August 12 in view of the rising cases in the district. During this period, only milk supply will be allowed and shops selling essentials will be permitted to remain open, according to district authorities.

'No action taken yet in Krushi Sevak recruitment scam'

RTI applicant yet to get compensation

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

This month, an RTI applicant received a letter from the State Agriculture Department seeking his bank details to deposit the compensation amount awarded to him last year with regard to an alleged scam in the 2016 Krushi Sevak recruitment examination.

Dr. Vikram Gaikwad, general secretary of the Maharashtra Youth Congress, said, "I filed an application under the Right to Information Act in October 2016, seeking documents related to the investigation into the alleged scam, which was published in newspapers."

The Maharashtra State Council of Examination conducted the Krushi Sevak recruitment examination in 2016 through a private partner, which landed in trouble over allegations of malpractice. The allegations involved – one student passing from two locations; two brothers passing with identical marks; passing of students with similar surnames from neighbouring villages; students in the age group of 20 to 22 clearing the exam from Retired Defence Personnel category; and interestingly, not a single student scoring in the 150-178 bracket in the 200-mark exam.

He said the allegations were discussed in the State Assembly in 2016 and the then agriculture secretary had recommended an inquiry by the Criminal Investigation Department. "But the then State government did not follow the recommendation and chose to conduct the probe through officers who were accused of irregu-

So much time has passed and those who cleared the dubious exam have joined duty

DR. VIKRAM GAIKWAD
General secretary of the Maharashtra Youth Congress

larities, who gave themselves a clean chit," he said.

Dr. Gaikwad's application seeking documents of investigation was denied by the office of the then agriculture commissioner. After being denied information, he filed an appeal, but his application was dismissed.

Dr. Gaikwad then filed another appeal in February 2017, which came up for hearing in May 2019.

The verdict said, "Instead of providing information, irregularities were covered up. It is a clear case of purposely denying information. The applicant has faced mental, financial and physical problems and therefore the authority concerned must pay a fine of ₹25,000."

The delay in the entire process resulted in over 700 candidates, who cleared the questionable examination, joining government duty. State Information Commissioner Sambhaji Sarkunde said during the three-year period, disturbing facts about the scam emerged. The Agriculture Department was also charged with withholding information.

Dr. Gaikwad said, "So much time has passed and those who cleared the dubious exam have joined duty. The previous government chose not to act against irregularities despite being alerted. Now, the present government can take the case to the High Court."

Fadnavis should lead stir against Shivaji statue removal, says Sena

Reinstall statue in Belagavi: Eknath Shinde to Karnataka CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday condemned the removal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue in Belagavi district of Karnataka and said all parties should come together to protest against the incident under the leadership of Maharashtra Leader of Opposition and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Devendra Fadnavis.

Belagavi has a sizable Marathi-speaking population and has been the subject of a long boundary dispute between the two States. The border dispute is pending before the Supreme Court.

Talking to reporters, Mr. Raut said, "Mr. Fadnavis should be taken into confidence over the issue and we should all unite under his leadership to protest against the action of the Belgaum



Eknath Shinde

police." The Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government had on Saturday shot off a letter to Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, seeking reinstatement of the statue of the Maratha warrior king.

Maharashtra Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde, who is a close aide of Chief Minister Uddhav, had written the letter to Karnataka government, where the BJP is in power.

Mr. Shinde, who is also

the minister in-charge for coordination on the Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue, said the statue was removed at Mangutti village. He said the statue had been installed with the permission of the gram panchayat, but the administration removed it deliberately.

Sena workers in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, which borders Karnataka, held a series of protests over the issue on Saturday.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Ashish Shelar alleged that the local Congress MLA was responsible for the removal of the statue. "We condemn the incident of removal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue. It should be restored with full respect. But will the Sena protest against the local Congress MLA who ordered the removal of the statue?" Mr. Shelar asked.

One killed, 7 injured in LPG cylinder blast, wall collapse

Neighbour dies trapped under debris

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE

One person was killed and seven others were injured when an LPG cylinder exploded in a flat and led to the collapse of a common wall separating two apartments in Pimpri-Chinchwad on Sunday, the police said.

The blast took place in the flat belonging to Surwade family at a housing society in Dighi area, but a person from Temkar family, residing in the adjoining apartment, died after the wall separating the two houses collapsed due to the impact of the blast. Police suspect the gas was leaking from the cylinder overnight.

"The explosion took place at 7.30 a.m. on Sunday, when Archana Surwade turned on an electric switch in her house. The explosion was so powerful that the common wall between the

The explosion was so powerful that the common wall between the flats collapsed

VIVEK LAWAND
Senior police inspector

flats of Surwades and Temkars collapsed," said senior police inspector Vivek Lawand of Dighi police station.

When the wall collapsed, Dnyaneshwar Temkar got trapped under the debris and died on the spot. His eight-year-old daughter also sustained injuries. Ms. Surwade was seriously injured and suffered around 80% burns. Five other members of her family also sustained injuries, Mr. Lawand said.

"Prima facie, it seems the liquefied petroleum gas leaked from the cylinder and caused an explosion the moment the electric switch was turned on," he said.

Record spike of 506 COVID-19 cases in Goa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

Goa on Sunday recorded 506 new COVID-19 cases, its highest single-day spike yet, State Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said.

"We are discussing the issue with the Chief Minister, who has already announced that Goa will get a second COVID-19 hospital," Mr. Rane said, adding that patients will be moved to the new facility set up in the sub-district hospital at Ponda in north Goa.

After chairing a meeting with health officials and medical experts, Mr. Rane said seven of the 10 patients undergoing plasma therapy are showing positive signs. He added that the State is not facing any shortage of medicines.

Heavy rain likely in Maharashtra: IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely in parts of Maharashtra due to a low pressure area formed over north-west and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Sunday.

"Most places in Maha-

ashtra received rain or thunderstorms on Saturday," the IMD official said. Heavy rain is likely in the Western Ghat sections of Madhya Maharashtra and the coast starting Sunday.

"Heavy rainfall is expected over the Vidarbha region on Monday, while Madhya Maharashtra would receive

thunderstorms accompanied with lightning," the official said. Mumbai and parts of the western coast will witness winds with speeds up to 50 to 60 km per hour.

The southwest monsoon is expected to become active again over Mumbai and other parts of coastal Maharashtra from Monday.

Scientists find 77 new butterfly species in Matheran

Three-member team identifies 140 rare species in hill station after 125 years

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

After a long gap of 125 years, scientists have found 140 rare species of butterflies, including 77 new ones, in Matheran. The last time butterflies were codified in this eco-sensitive zone was in 1894, when a researcher identified 78 species.

"Finding the forgotten gems: Revisiting the butterflies of Matheran after 125 years", a research paper by scientists from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Somaiya Vidya Vihar University published in the Biodiversity Data Journal, provides a glimpse of the rare butterflies in the hill station.

The paper said, "We observed a strong seasonal variation in butterfly



Winged beauties: The research paper provides a glimpse of the rare butterflies in the hill station. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

diversity. The maximum diversity (125) of butterflies was recorded during winter, while the least (80) during monsoon. A high similarity of butterfly species composition was observed between the pairs of sites studied, tending towards perfect nestedness."

The paper has listed the species surveyed between



2011 and 2019. "Ours is the first dedicated checklist for the butterflies of Matheran after J.A. Betham (1894). He listed 78 species of butterflies, combining the list of sixty butterflies provided by Smith (1882) and the list of butterflies recorded by him between April and May 1892," the paper said.



## Safety deficit

The Kozhikode air crash shows that there can be no compromise on airport infrastructure

The tragic crash of an Air India Express ‘Vande Bharat’ relief flight in Kozhikode, in which 18 people, including two crew members, lost their lives and many were left severely injured, is a forceful reminder that there are no acceptable risks in aviation. Although an even bigger disaster was averted by the absence of fire in the aircraft, the crash snuffed out the lives of many returning home from Dubai after a long, traumatic separation from loved ones in the pandemic. Many Indians could not quickly return home from countries where they were employed, studying or travelling, although they desperately sought flights back home since March. For those who took that long-awaited trip on August 7, it ended in disaster. There are clear pointers to the dangerous nature of flight operations at Kozhikode airport in the midst of a strong monsoon, even with the availability of an instrument landing system for the “tabletop” runway carved into undulating terrain. There are problems with visibility, a far shorter safety area at the runway end than optimal, and absence of arrester systems that could stop an overshooting plane from falling off the edge, as it happened with this aircraft. Which of these factors, along with the monsoon impact, led to the disaster will become clear with a professional investigation. The Civil Aviation Ministry should make a full disclosure on the technical evidence gathered, the integrity of which will be scrutinised by safety organisations worldwide.

Apparently anxious to project an image of normalcy, the Ministry allowed the airport to restart flights in a day, while the accident cause was yet to be ascertained. If rainy conditions existed during the landing, as Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said, these may persist during the rest of the monsoon. Each flight must, therefore, be considered for a potential diversion to a safe airport nearby in bad weather. Significantly, the admission by the DGCA that the key recommendation of runway extension at Kozhikode made almost a decade ago was not possible due to land acquisition issues – although the facility could still support wide-bodied aircraft – strengthens the view that corners may have been cut on safety. The instance of an Air India Express plane suffering a tail strike in the same airport last year should have led to a full assessment, following up on the recommendations made after the 2010 crash in Mangaluru. Since the visible cause of Friday’s crash was an overshoot, the runway continues to pose a threat. Bad meteorological conditions such as rain and wind, and runway surface problems such as stagnation of water or rubber deposits that contribute to skidding endanger passengers and crew. Every air safety incident diminishes India’s reputation. The Kozhikode crash should lead to a fresh review of all risky airports. Transparent remedial action must be taken immediately.

## Balancing priorities

Development goals must be pursued without breaching environment regulations

Forecasts of ‘good’ or ‘normal’ monsoons are often beguiling and belie the ominous. This year, the annual floods that upend the Brahmaputra Valley have been followed by intense spells along the Konkan coast and Mumbai, and now Kerala, which until the end of last month recorded a slight deficit. The landslide in Idukki, that has so far claimed 22 lives and rendered several homeless, follows from a continuing spell of heavy rains in Kerala. Most districts have received three or four times more rain than what is normal. Last year too, neighbouring Wayanad saw multiple hamlets wiped out and the year before, the devastating floods in the State forced a debate on the need for new models of development. Landslips, or landslides, in the Western Ghats have a history. Following the 2018 floods, data from the Geological Survey of India showed that Kerala had experienced 67 major landslide events and several minor ones from 1961-2013. As part of a National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping (NLSM) programme, the agency mapped several States in the Western Ghats, North-eastern States, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand to assess how vulnerable their districts were. Nearly 13,000 square kilometres were mapped until 2018 and 6,000 were to be covered in 2019-20 in Kerala, according to the programme website. Nearly 13 of the State’s 14 districts were prone to landslides and what made Kerala particularly vulnerable was the high population density – over 800 per square kilometre – compared to other States that also faced high landslide risk.

The objective of the NLSM maps is to help State and district authorities incorporate the risk of landslides into zoning laws. However, just as in the case of earthquake zonation maps, or for that matter, any exercise to scientifically ascertain the risk from natural hazards to a region, these laws are barely implemented in the right spirit. And this is not unique to Kerala. The details might vary but it is now beyond contestation that India is living in a new climate normal. Frequent high intensity bursts of rain will co-exist along with long dry spells. It has emerged from studies of Kerala’s topography that quarrying and the unscientific cutting of slopes into hills aggravates the risk of soil erosion. Operationalising the State’s disaster management apparatus and allocating funds for preparedness are key policy responses, but Kerala also must double down on enforcing regulations and observing zoning laws as well as ensuring that slopes carved into hilly terrain have adequate provisions for draining water. A lack of compliance with such principles is often a key reason why natural hazards end up causing a significant number of avoidable casualties. There is a cost to pursuing development goals without paying attention to environmental constraints.

# A new direction for India-U.S. ties

The fresh paradigm should be on how to structure common understanding; China needs to be factored in



SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

The United States under the leadership of President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the early 1940s once pressed Britain’s Prime Minister Winston Churchill to free India and co-opt India as a formal ally in World War II. But Britain firmly and obstinately refused to agree despite the writing on the wall – that Indians had stood up and would achieve freedom sooner rather than later. India stabilised after a bloody Partition in 1947, declared its commitment to democracy, fundamental rights, free press and non-violence in a written Constitution which came into force on January 26, 1950.

### The UN and China

India thus appeared to the U.S. as worthy of replacing China in the most important body of the United Nations, namely the Security Council, as a Permanent Member with a Veto in view of the Communist overthrow of the Chiang Kai-shek-led government.

According to a recent study by Dr. Anton Harder, “Not at the Cost of China: New Evidence Regarding US Proposals to Nehru for Joining the United Nations Security Council” Working Paper #76”, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Washington, DC, USA, March 2015” (<https://bit.ly/3f0XYON>), the author states that the U.S.’s offer for India to join the UN Security Council was conveyed by India’s Ambassador to the U.S. then, viz., Ms. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Jawaharlal Nehru’s sister.

In late August 1950, Mrs. Pandit wrote to her brother from Washington DC that: “One matter... in the State Department should be known to you. This is the unseating of China as a Permanent Member in the Security Council and of

India being put in her place.”

“Nehru’s response to his sister within the week was unequivocal: ‘In your letter you mention that the State Department is trying to unseat China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council and to put India in her place.

‘So far as we are concerned, we are not going to countenance it. That would be bad from every point of view. It would be a clear affront to China and it would mean some kind of a break between us and China.

‘We shall go on pressing for China’s admission in the UN and the Security Council. India because of many factors, is certainly entitled to a permanent seat in the security council. But we are not going to at the cost of China.’”

Nehru not only declined the U.S. offer to India to become a UNSC Permanent Member with Veto but instead campaigned for China to take up that seat.

The U.S. however resisted that campaign till 1972, when in a turnaround the U.S. supported Communist People’s Republic of China and entered into “strategic partnership” in the 1970s onwards with the reform-minded new leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

Subsequently what China did to Nehru for this generosity at India’s expense is history from which we must learn. No use is served by crying about China’s betrayal or perfidy.

### The shift to Pakistan

In 1953 after India’s tilt to the Soviet Union and China in the Korean war, the U.S. turned to Pakistan as a possible counterweight in South Asia against the Soviet Union and China. The U.S. made Pakistan a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and liberally gave aid and armaments.

Pakistan which was no match in military, economic development, and ancient and continuous culture that ensured democracy, began to dream of equality with India in the international domain. As a consequence, India had to



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

go to war with Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and 1999, losing precious lives defending our own territory. The U.S. even sent a Seventh Fleet Task Force with nuclear weapons on board to threaten us on the dismemberment of Pakistan.

The rest is history. We have to learn from our past mistakes. Today there is a new opportunity with the U.S. but it is not on a clean slate.

### America’s November poll

The success of our new bonding with the U.S. will first depend on the outcome of the U.S. Presidential elections this November. The Democratic party rival and Presidential candidate, Joe Biden, has already taken a hostile stand against our government, with the Left wing and liberals in the U.S. highly critical of the Narendra Modi government, such as rubbishing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act passed by India’s Parliament with a two-thirds majority.

In inner U.S. circles our purchase from Russia of the S-400 air defence missile system and the refusal to agree to America’s request to send Indian troops to Afghanistan have mostly browned off U.S. officials. U.S. policy makers know Indians love atmospherics and *me-las*, but not substantive issues which concern the U.S.

Therefore, we need to build trust with the U.S. that we will give to the U.S. as good as it gives us, and not give us lectures instead. The U.S. will then respond more than what we concede.

In 1991 when then Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar told me to find out if we can get a policy-conditions free loan at a concessional interest rate from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), I told him that the IMF would never agree,

# Bringing nuclear risks back into popular imagination

Awareness of the horrors of nuclear weapons needs to be revived given public apathy and political complacency



MANPREET SETHI

‘Little Boy’ was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 at 0815 hours. This was followed three days later by the dropping of ‘Fat Man’ on Nagasaki, at 1101 hours. The two nuclear bombs vaporised around 150,000 people who were going about their morning business; 130,000 others succumbed to burns, radiation sickness, and other ailments that the collapsed health system could not treat. Few, then, understood why their skin erupted wounds that would not heal, hair fell off in clumps, and stomach churned with pain and nausea. Several *hibakusha*, or survivors of the atomic bombings, have recounted how an ordinary day turned into one where they wished they too had died in that instant flash.

### Buried under

The purpose of recalling these horrors from 75 years ago is to ensure that nuclear armed states do not forget the real nature of nuclear weapons. Human memory is short and often preoccupied with the immediate. Currently, the socio-economic-health emergency posed by COVID-19 and the grow-

ing geopolitical tensions between major powers owing to their abrasive behaviour seem to be consuming us all. But nuclear risks are lurking just below the surface, and they are growing.

### Dangers of unintended use

Among the risks of nuclear use, the highest likelihood is that of inadvertent escalation due to miscalculation or misperceptions. It is less likely that adversaries will launch pre-meditated, deliberate nuclear attacks because each understands that a splendid first strike is impossible and that nuclear retaliation cannot be escaped. Of course, the severity of the damage would depend on the number and yield of weapons used. But studies indicate that use of even a fraction of the weapons held in medium-sized arsenals would cause a massive human tragedy and have long-term repercussions for food and water availability, agricultural output, climate change, migration, etc.

Possibilities of unintended use are exacerbated by many factors: stressed inter-state relations, unchecked strategic modernisation as arms control arrangements wither and nations hedge against each other; adoption of nuclear postures that peddle the benefits of ‘limited’ nuclear war; and emergent technologies creating new anxieties. Advancing capabilities of cyberattacks on nuclear command and control, blurring lines between conventional and nuclear



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delivery, induction of hypersonic missiles capable of high speed and manoeuvrability, incorporation of artificial intelligence in nuclear decision making are new developments that threaten to create unknown risks. As capabilities grow and inter-state trust diminishes, chances of stumbling into nuclear war are not insignificant.

### The Cold War and after

However, these risks are not part of our collective popular imagination today. During the Cold War, citizens of affected nations were made to undergo regular nuclear drills. As sirens blared, everyone had to rush to bunkers created in homes, schools, hospitals, etc. There were guidelines on what to equip these nuclear shelters with so as to be able to sustain lives in case mushroom clouds went up. Several works such as novels, movies and TV documentaries depicted life “the day after”. These graphic depictions kept nuclear weapons and their highly destructive nature alive in the consciousness of the people. Public pressure translated into civil society movements that demanded action from

but since a large size of the voting power in the IMF was directly or indirectly controlled by the U.S., we should placate the U.S.

Thereafter, Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar spoke to the U.S. that India would agree to a pending American request with the Prime Minister’s Office for permission to refuel their air force planes flying from the Philippines to Saudi Arabia for the first Gulf War when Iraq occupied Kuwait.

I thereafter told the U.S. Ambassador in New Delhi about this but I said it was conditional on getting \$2 billion (1991 prices). Over the weekend that loan arrived and India was saved from a default.

### In synchrony

Today, thus, the new or fresh paradigm should be on how to structure India-U.S. understanding and which is in sync with common India-U.S. perspectives. For this structuring we must: first realise that India-U.S. relations require give and take on both sides.

What India needs to take today is for dealing with the Ladakh confrontation on our side of the Line of Actual Control by China. Obviously, India needs U.S. hardware military equipment. India does not need U.S. troops to fight our battles against China on our border.

Third, the U.S. needs India to fight her enemies in the neighbourhood such as in Afghanistan. It is my view that India should send two divisions gradually to Afghanistan and relieve U.S. troops to go home.

India needs the support of the U.S. and its ally, Israel, in cyber-warfare, satellite mappings of China and Pakistan, intercepts of electronic communication, hard intelligence on terrorists, and controlling the military and the Inter-Services Intelligence in Pakistan.

India needs the U.S. to completely develop the Andaman & Nicobar, and also the Lakshadweep Islands as a naval and air force base, which the U.S. can share along with its allies such as Indonesia and Japan.

India must be firm in two areas

political leaders to engage with the subject of risk reduction through unilateral, bilateral or multilateral measures.

The end of the Cold War pretty much brought down the curtains on nuclear weapons for the common man. The perceived sense of danger of nuclear war receded and nuclear strategies went back to being dictated and driven primarily by security conclave. Over the years, technological advancements and growing hyper-nationalist tendencies have shaped strategic discourse in a manner that is largely devoid of popular participation. But, this connect is important to temper national choices and create the much needed checks and balances.

General awareness of the horrors accompanying nuclear weapons, therefore, needs to be revived since a high level of public apathy and political complacency have brought us to the threshold where the risks remain high but the desire to address them is low. In fact, one does not see a shared desire for nuclear risk reduction among nuclear armed states. Drunk on their faith in deterrence, there is a tendency to use strategies of nuclear brinkmanship and ambiguity that actually add to the risks. There is also a display of confidence in being able to manage and control risks. However, umpire war games have shown that it is impossible to calculatedly climb the escalation ladder. Any nuclear use between nuclear adversaries

which are not amenable to give and take. One is that economic relations must be based on macro-economic commercial principles. Free, indiscriminate flow of U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) is not in India’s national interest.

### Look at technologies

Thus, India needs technologies such as thorium utilisation, desalination of sea water, and hydrogen fuel cells, but not Walmart and U.S. universities to start campuses in India, as proposed in the new National Education Policy draft.

Eighth, the U.S. must allow India’s exports of agricultural products including *Bos indicus* milk, which are of highly competitive prices in the world.

FDI should be allowed into India selectively from abroad, including from the U.S., based on the economic theory of comparative advantage and not on subsidies and gratis.

Tenth, tariffs of both India and the U.S. should be lowered, and the Indian rupee should be gradually revalued to ₹35 to a dollar. Later, with the economy picking up, the rupee rate should go below 10 to the dollar.

The other firm constraint is that India should not provide the U.S. with our troops to enter Tibet, or be involved in the Hong Kong and Taiwan issues because there is always a possibility of a leadership change in China, as what happened when Deng Xiaoping replaced Mao Zedong’s nominees in 1980. Thus, China’s policy changed very favourably towards India. In the cases of Tibet, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, we have made explicit agreements. In the case of Tibet, two formal treaties were signed by Nehru (1954) and A.B. Vajpayee (2003).

In the last point, in the long run, India, the U.S., and China should form a trilateral commitment for world peace provided Chinese current international policies undergo a healthy change.

*Dr. Subramanian Swamy is an economist from Harvard and a Rajya Sabha MP, now on his sixth term*

would cause a humanitarian disaster.

### A media campaign

In order to get nations to understand this, it is necessary to expose leaders and societies to the full range of physical, economic, social, political, health, environmental, and psychological effects of nuclear weapons. This could be most effectively done through use of popular media. Just as the fight against COVID-19 is being won through global high intensity information dissemination about various facets of this highly contagious disease, a similar information campaign about the destructive potential of nuclear weapons is needed. This will help on three counts: compel leaders to rationalise their weapon requirements; force nations to find ways of reducing nuclear risks; and gradually pave the path towards elimination of nuclear weapons.

Recalling the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through events all year round on its 75th anniversary is an opportunity to bring nuclear risks back into popular imagination and into the political agenda. Creative media can help by tapping available modern means of mass communication to create stories with identifiable characters and situations that tug at the heart and instil a larger respect for humanity.

*Manpreet Sethi is Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Battered yet again

It is saddening that the people of Kerala, for the third consecutive year, are undergoing difficulties following monsoon-related flooding and landslides. Though these are termed natural disasters, one cannot ignore human intervention that aggravates these issues. Ruthless exploitation of nature and its resources coupled with unscientific development have grave consequences. These man-made disasters must be addressed in the backdrop of the new EIA draft 2020 that turns a blind eye toward

environment preservation.

S. SREELAKSHMI,  
Elanjy, Alapuram, Kerala

### Election parallels

There seem to be several parallels between the Indian general election of 2014 and the just-ended election in Sri Lanka. Though an agenda and tactics of divisiveness aided the NDA in the Indian election of 2014, it was corruption, some perceived, and inefficiency of governance that hit the UPA. So is it the case with the UNP in Sri Lanka. It must also be noted that the Tamil population has come

to terms with the reality that Tamil nationalism may not fetch them dividends. There are lessons from the Sri Lankan experience.

GEORGE MATHAI,  
Kochi

### Kozhikode air crash

The tragic air accident at Kozhikode is a reminder that the findings of safety audits have to be taken seriously, and to their logical conclusion. Further, it is imperative that airports in the vicinity or middle of busy cities are shifted in a phased manner to places where safety protocols can be observed to the

maximum. Relocating airports outside city limits would ensure safety and minimise congestion.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,  
Chennai

■ Credit must be given to local residents who rushed to the aid of those on board the flight. Many youngsters forgot COVID-19 protocols, the downpour and even the possible danger of a fire. It has to be noted that the airport area has been listed as a pandemic containment zone. Their help in spotting passengers, and later disseminating information using social media were

outstanding gestures. There were large queues of blood donors at hospitals even at midnight, proving that humanity, humaneness and

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the interview titled “Lockdown has hit nutritional services” (August 9, 2020), the reply to the question “What are the challenges India is facing vis-a-vis nutrition?” needs to be recast as follows: “According to a Lancet study last year, of the 10.4 lakh under-5 deaths in India in 2017, as many as 7,06,000 deaths could be attributed to malnutrition. In other words, two in three under-5 deaths were due to malnutrition. So on an average, every day 1,934 children under five die with malnutrition as underlying cause; they could all be alive if there was no malnutrition. But due to COVID-19 induced food security and malnutrition these figures will go up.”

In the article titled “Verify before reporting” (Notebook, OpEd page, August 7, 2020), Rafic Hariri was referred to as former President of Lebanon. It should have been former Prime Minister.

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hope are still alive.

M. PRADYU,  
Thalikkavu, Kannur, Kerala

# COVID-19 deaths may be higher than reported

The death figures for India may have to be adjusted for low coverage of medical certification of cause of death



HEMANT DEEPAK SHEWADE & GIRIDARA GOPAL PARAMESWARAN

As on July 31, India had the third highest burden of COVID-19 globally (based on total reported cases). According to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), there were 35,747 reported COVID-19 deaths and 5,45,048 active cases. India had 26 COVID-19 deaths per million population. This has been cited to substantiate the low mortality in the country. As per Indian Council of Medical Research guidelines, if it is medically certified that the underlying cause of death is suspected or confirmed COVID-19, then that death should be recorded and reported as a COVID-19 death.

The States update the number of COVID-19 deaths to the MoHFW based on the updates received from cities and districts. The reported COVID-19 deaths have to be updated in the medical certification of cause of death (MCCD) web portal. Updates from States and the MoHFW are our immediate source of COVID-19 deaths. The same should also be available at the end of the year when the MCCD reports are collated. The latest MCCD report is available for 2017.

**Death registration and MCCD**  
Do the reported COVID-19 deaths reflect the true picture? Before we get into this, we need to understand the prevailing coverage of death registration and MCCD in India. According to the latest vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System (CRS, 2018), 86% of the total deaths were registered of which 22% had a medically certified cause of death (MCCD report, 2017). This means 18.9% (0.86\*0.22) of the total deaths were medically certified with a cause of death. The key reason for this is that only 34% received institutional medical attention at the time of death (CRS, 2018). Another reason is that not all hospitals (including public and private hospitals in rural and urban areas) have been brought under the coverage of MCCD. Errors, missing details or issues in the quali-



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ty of MCCD have also been reported. This proportion of total deaths that are medically certified with a cause of death varies from State to State. It is less than 10% in Nagaland (1.5%), Bihar (2.4%), Jharkhand (2.6%), Uttarakhand (5%), Uttar Pradesh (5%) and Madhya Pradesh (7.4%); more than 60% in Delhi (60.7%) and Puducherry (63.7%); and 100% in Goa.

The COVID-19 deaths compiled by States predominantly include deaths occurring in COVID-19-designated facilities among reported COVID-19 cases. Hence, suspected COVID-19 deaths occurring at home or during transit or in non-COVID hospitals may not be reported. Outside designated COVID-19 facilities, there could be many instances of suspected COVID-19 being the cause of death (testing not done or results not available); this may not be captured. This is possible in the context of a prevailing systemic under-registration of deaths and the poor coverage of MCCD. This may be more pronounced in rural and semi-urban areas where there is poor access to health facilities and/or qualified medical doctors. Hence, we need to adjust for the prevailing under-registration of deaths and poor coverage of MCCD to arrive at the correct estimate of COVID-19 deaths.

**Estimated COVID-19 deaths**  
To adjust for the prevailing under-registration of deaths and poor coverage of MCCD, we multiplied the reported COVID-19 deaths by a multiplication factor. It was 5.29 for India and calculated as the inverse of 18.9% (the coverage of MCCD among total deaths based on the 2018 CRS and 2017 MCCD reports). This gave a total of 1,88,938 estimated COVID-19 deaths taking the deaths per million population to 138. This is in contrast to the widely prevailing notion that deaths are very low in India.

This estimated COVID-19 deaths per million population is higher than Russia (96 per million, 100% MCCD of total deaths), similar to South Africa (137 per million, 92% MCCD) and lower than the U.S. (477 per million, 100% MCCD), Brazil (440 per million, 99% MCCD), Mexico (362 per million, 100% MCCD), Peru (588 per million, 57% MCCD), Chile (498 per million, 95% MCCD), Spain (608 per million, 95% MCCD) and Iran (202 per million, 90% MCCD). Most of the above countries (but for Peru) have a high MCCD coverage. Hence, we do not need to adjust the reported COVID-19 deaths of these countries.

Within India, we calculated State-wise estimated COVID-19 deaths by multiplying the reported COVID-19 deaths with the multiplication factor for the respective State. The top 10 States based on estimated COVID-19 deaths (ranging from 347 per million population to 114) in decreasing order are Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, U.P. and Tamil Nadu. If we go by reported COVID-19 deaths, then Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh do not find a mention in the top 10.

Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, U.P., Bihar and Jharkhand constitute 43% of the national population. These States with <12% MCCD coverage and less than 10,000 COVID-19 tests per million population contribute to 38% of the total estimated COVID-19 deaths. If we go by reported COVID-19 deaths, then these States contribute to a mere 12% of total reported COVID-19 deaths. This clearly shows the extent to which cases and deaths could be missed.

COVID-19 deaths per million population is a straightforward metric but this entirely depends on the timing of the epidemic in the given geo-

graphic region. The deaths per million increase as the epidemic progresses. Therefore, inter-country or inter-State comparisons have to be made and interpreted considering the stage of the epidemic.

In India, many media reports have highlighted that when suspected COVID-19 was the cause of death (testing not done or results not available), it was erroneously not reported as COVID-19 death. Hence, even among the registered deaths, the COVID-19 deaths appear to be under-reported. Therefore, the estimated COVID-19 deaths calculated by us, despite the adjustment, are an underestimate.

**Considering adjustments**  
We call upon the MoHFW to consider the adjustments suggested before arriving at the COVID-19 deaths and before making inter-State and inter-country comparisons. The States with a relatively high estimated COVID-19 death per million population and low testing need to be focused upon. These are also the States that have poor healthcare infrastructure. Additionally, this is an opportunity to improve MCCD. Reporting of deaths with suspected COVID-19 as the cause needs to be encouraged and ensured from COVID-19 facilities, non-COVID-19 facilities and homes. The current COVID-19 reporting mechanism is very different from the MCCD reporting. Therefore, we request that it is ensured that the reported COVID-19 deaths are promptly captured in the MCCD web portal. Also, for triangulation of data, we urge the MoHFW to release monthly or quarterly bulletins of national and State-wise deaths reported under CRS and MCCD. Data under CRS will enable us to compare the deaths registered before and during the epidemic and help understand how close are the reported and estimated COVID-19 deaths to the true picture. We also recommend the MoHFW to monitor the proportion of COVID-19 deaths coded with 'suspected COVID-19' as the cause of death.

*Hemant Deepak Shewade and Giridara Gopal Parameswaran are community physicians by training. Hemant works for an international NGO and is based in Bengaluru. Giridara works at the All India Institute of Medical Science, Delhi. This piece along with graphs can be accessed online at [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com)*

## FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

# The elusive search for truth

Many people trust social media forwards more than evidence-based, data-driven journalism



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

Some readers wondered whether my reading of the crisis in the news media is about journalism or about the news industry. Though the fortunes of the news industry have a bearing on journalism, there is, indeed, a difference between looking at issues that govern journalism and the factors that contribute to the financial stress of the media industry. Over the last few years, I have been discussing the impact of digitalisation on journalism. The pandemic has accelerated the process of digital transformation of the news media. Therefore, these issues need close scrutiny.

One of the defining elements of analog journalism was the way two crucial functions of journalism – bearing witness and making sense – complemented each other and helped people make informed choices. When I talk about the strength of analog, I am neither romanticising the past nor am I a Luddite. Most importantly, I do not believe in nostalgia. Many scholars have established “how rose-coloured glasses always leads to an unfair distortion – looking back on the best of the past while comparing it to the worst of the present.” Hence, when I talk about the digital information news environment, I am talking about how there needs to be a conducive atmosphere for credible information to resonate with the people. Literature on misinformation, disinformation and malinformation reveals a new distinction in the minds of the citizens. Editors and journalists have to contend with a new breed of sceptics. These are the people who trust social media forwards more than evidence-based, data-driven journalism. Their confirmation bias flows from encrypted social media platforms that are full of conspiracy theories.

Some terms – for instance, ‘post-truth’ and ‘alternative facts’ – that have gained currency in the last five years fail to explain the complex reality that is haunting journalism and its reliance on evidence and data. Let me explain this with a specific example. On the first anniversary of the dilution of Article 370, *The Hindu*, apart from carrying news reports, published two lead articles – Happpymon Jacob’s “A year on, Article 370 and Kashmir mythmaking” (August 4) and Ami-

tabh Mattoo’s “Rekindle Kashmir’s lost and real connect” (August 5) – and a ‘Data Point’ titled “Paradise lost” (August 5). But the reactions we got to these were puzzling. One reader dismissed the ‘Data Point’ and placed his faith above the evidence available. He asked: “Is your source reliable? Was it done by an independent agency or some ‘politically’ motivated one? Why compare the J&K lockdown with the COVID-19 lockdown? What are you trying to convey apart from confusing people and feeding negativity? Yes, both the lockdowns are severe for J&K but they will be eventually removed and normalcy restored.”

Another reader, Raghavan, was angry with Mr. Jacob’s piece. He said: “A mythmaking opinion from the factory of mythmaking, JNU, anxious about the myths made for decades being exposed as myths. Expecting a miracle within a year to prove that undoing Article 370 is better than the decades of turmoil with no end in sight while nurturing that Article is in the realm of myths, really.” Jugal Ghosh felt that Mr. Mattoo was wrong and said: “The abrogation stretched the state benefits to all its residents and the sooner they realise it, the better it is for all. This pain about abrogation is purely imaginary to make news.”

## Facts and truth

First Draft Footnotes is a study commissioned by First Draft with the aim of protecting communities around the world from harmful, false, and misleading information. Silicon Valley conglomerates rely on quantitative attributes. They value the metrics that drive the traffic to websites. The Footnotes series, on the other hand, brought back the qualitative component to counterbalance the reliance on analytics to determine the health of our news and information environment. One of their recent studies was about the perceived difference of news consumers between facts and “truth”, and about how this perception creates vulnerabilities online. The study documents our paradoxical existence in more ways than one. For instance, it points out that “those who generate and amplify misinformation and malinformation are the ones who often use words related to the truth, such as disingenuous; nonsense; false; charade; deception; concealed, disguised, hiding, show; find; reveals; exposes; uncovers.” In this world view, journalism is all about facts, but conspiracy theories are what gain the status of truth. The crisis is not with journalism alone.

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# At stake is our bodily integrity

The potential misuse of data collected during this pandemic raises concerns beyond just privacy

TANISHA RANJIT

Governments around the world are increasingly turning to technology as a tool to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In India, these tools have ranged from various contact tracing apps to using drones. Privacy concerns have been raised by activists, lawyers and concerned citizens about the use of such intrusive digital technologies. But while these concerns are valid, a crucial element remains unrecognised: what is at stake is not merely our informational privacy, but our autonomy, dignity, bodily integrity, and equality.

We live in a world where data about us are constantly being collected. Governments and corporations are moving towards using data as a means of governance and regulation of what our physical bodies can do. This is what is happening, for example, when you are asked to digitally scan your fingerprint to allow your physical body to enter your workspace. Or you may have felt a sense of unease when you realise you are under surveillance through CCTV cameras. Nobody is physically present, yet we somehow feel the gaze on our bodies.

## Bodily integrity and autonomy

Informational privacy may no longer be sufficient to ensure our rights are protected. Instead we need to include matters such as bodily integrity, autonomy and dignity. In the current jump towards technologies as a means to combat the pandemic and control our bodies, this is particularly evident. Consider the questions of control that are raised as this line is becoming blurred. Most people would feel uncomfortable inviting an official into their home every hour to show they are complying with quarantine orders. But effectively, that is what is happening through apps such as Karnataka’s Quarantine Watch, which requires those under quarantine to send hourly selfies with GPS coordinates to officials. Through your digital images, your physical body is being disciplined to stay at home, without the need for the official to be physically present.

And where personal data about

ourselves are shared or leaked, this may lead to us experiencing a sense of lack of control, fear of uncertainty, and loss, even though nothing has been taken from us physically. This is evident, for example, where data of those who have been home quarantined are shared publicly. Those affected have reported immense psychological stress. In Hyderabad, one home-quarantined man described his experience as “torture” after people started calling at odd hours to provide suggestions or ask questions.

## Greater discrimination

Thus, the potential misuse of our data raises concerns beyond just privacy. It can lead to individuals feeling humiliated, publicly targeted and shamed, raising concerns of dignity and discrimination. The consequences of the public sharing of personal data will not be felt equally by everyone. The experiences we have navigating the material world are often relational to who we are and what body we have. Those who do not conform to society’s dominant views, such as trans people, tend to face greater discrimination. In Hyderabad, derogatory posters targeting trans people were put up saying interactions with them could lead to COVID-19. Such differences also apply to the virtual world shaping our online experiences. Given the greater risk of stigma trans people face, public sharing of their personal data can have dangerous consequences.

So, while a pandemic might warrant greater collection of our data, we must not lose sight of the harms this can bring, now and in the future. The data collected by various institutions can be used to re-exert control over our bodies, through ways often unknown, making it hard to question this. But data protection legislation has not kept up with this new reality and the challenges it brings. Formulated on the premise of data as a ‘resource’ or ‘oil’, they tend to completely miss out on the issues of bodily integrity and autonomy.

*Tanisha Ranjit is a junior researcher at the Internet Democracy Project, a member of the Data Governance Network*



## DATA POINT

### Empty coffers

The government's tax revenues recorded a massive shortfall in the first three months of FY21 due to the stringent COVID-19-related lockdown. While all tax heads recorded falls, GST dropped year-on-year by 41% in that period. Even while revenue dwindled, expenditure recorded a marginal increase resulting in fiscal deficit widening to a whopping 83% of the year's target in the first quarter. By **The Hindu Data Team**

#### 1. Tax revenue

India earns 80%-90% of its total revenue through taxes. Of this, corporation tax, income tax and GST contribute about 20%-25% each. In FY21, the share of gross tax revenue is budgeted to be only 78.3% of total revenue against 89.8% in FY19. This means that dependency on tax revenue has come down lately though it still remains high

Share of tax revenue as a % of total revenue				
Year	Share of gross tax	Share of corporation tax	Share of income tax	Share of GST
FY19	89.8%	28.6%	20.4%	25.1%
FY20	80.2%	22.6%	20.7%	22.7%
FY21	78.3%	22.0%	20.6%	22.3%

^ Revised estimates for FY20; Budget estimates for FY21

#### 2. Income comes down

The table compares the revenues from tax sources in Q1FY21 (April-June) with the same quarter last year. In FY20, by the first quarter, 16.3% of the year's gross tax revenue target was achieved, while in FY21, by the first quarter, only 11.1% was achieved. The gross tax revenue fell by 32.7% in Q1FY21 compared to Q1FY20

Taxes	% achieved of FY20's target by first quarter	% achieved of FY21's target by first quarter	% change in tax collected in Q1FY21 compared to Q1FY20
Gross tax	16.3%	11.1%	-32.7%
Corporation tax	9.2%	8.0%	-23.3%
Income tax	17.0%	9.7%	-35.9%
GST	47.4%	26.8%	-41.0%

#### 3. Spending goes up marginally

The table compares the expenditure in Q1FY21 with the same quarter in the previous year. India spent 26.8% of this year's target expenditure by the first quarter, while only 25.9% was spent in the same period last year. Expenditure increased by 13.1% in the first quarter of FY21 compared to the same period last year. Due to revenue shortfall, fiscal deficit (revenue minus expenditure) widened to 83.2% of the year's target, which is a record high for any first quarter

Parameter	% of FY20's target achieved by Q1FY20	% of FY21's target achieved by Q1FY21	% change in figure in Q1FY21 compared to Q1FY20
Expenditure	25.9%	26.8%	+13.1%
Fiscal deficit	61.4%	83.2%	+53.3%

#### 4. State-wise

Graph shows the GST collected in Q1 of FY21 and the change from the same period last year. Except two States in the Northeast, collections fell in all other States

SOURCE: GST.GOV.IN, BUDGET DOCUMENTS, CGA.NIC.IN, PIB

## The Hindu.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 10, 1970

## Hopeful turn in West Asia

The 90-day ceasefire accepted by Egypt, Israel and Jordan went into effect on Friday night and the guns have stopped firing in the Suez Canal sector. So far so good. Since Syria and the Palestinian guerillas have rejected the cease-fire, military activity can be expected to continue on the Syrian, Lebanese and Jordanian fronts. But it is the Suez front that is the most sensitive, carrying the danger, ever since Soviet combat pilots took a hand in Egypt's defence, of the conflict escalating into a direct confrontation, between the U.S. and Russia. It was evidently this danger that ultimately made the two super-powers join hands in a major effort to reverse the gears. The cease-fire is no doubt the product of American initiative but it could not have come about without Soviet co-operation. President Nasser agreed to it only under Russian persuasion. At the same time, it has to be recognised that Mr. Nasser and Mrs. Golda Meir acted with courage and realism in accepting the American proposals. They had to make that decision in the face of severe opposition from important allies.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 10, 1920

## The Tilak Day

A public meeting of the ladies of Bombay was held on Sunday [August 9] evening to express their sorrow and sense of loss to the country on the death of Mr. Tilak. Mrs. Saraladevi Chaudhurani presided. As the crowd was too great for the spacious hall of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya an overflow meeting was held in the compound, with the chairman having to address twice. Saraladevi in her address said that the wonderful funeral procession of Mr. Tilak testified the appreciation by the people of Mr. Tilak's love for his countrymen, a love that hoped highest and braved all and made him suffer repeatedly for their sake. Swaraj to him was a passion and he gallantly fought all his life for the interests of his country. She exhorted the audience to follow his simplicity of dress and manners and use nothing but swadeshi goods. The speaker deprecated the slavish imitation of following the latest Western fashions in dress and passionately appealed to all her sisters to show their love for the departed patriot by taking a vow for using nothing but swadeshi goods at least for some years, if not forever.

FROM PAGE ONE

## 10 killed in blaze at COVID-19 care facility

“Swarna Palace is a major fire hazard. It did not have proper exit points and that made the rescue operation very difficult; we had to use ladders to bring down the trapped people,” Mr. Raza said.

### PM expresses grief

Prime Minister Narendra Modi who spoke to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy following the accident, conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan

and State Home Minister M. Sucharitha also expressed their condolences to the bereaved family members.

Vijaywada Collector A Md. Imtiaz said safety aspects at the other quarantine centres were being verified and stern action would be initiated against the persons responsible for the accident.

Fire Services Director Jayaram Naik said certain violations of fire safety norms were observed and the lease system was being verified.

(With inputs from PTI)

## Defence Ministry to impose import embargo

He added that the government will push the Swadeshi movement started by freedom fighters and Mahatma Gandhi during the Independence Movement.

“The Ministry of Defence is now ready for a big push to #AtmanirbharBharat initiative. ....Taking cue from that evocation, the Ministry of Defence has prepared a list of 101 items for which there would be an embargo on the import beyond the timeline indicated against them. This is a big step towards self-reliance in defence. #AtmanirbharBharat,” Mr. Singh said in his Twitter series.

He said the decision will offer a great opportunity to the Indian defence industry to manufacture the items in the negative list by using their own design and development capabilities or adopting the technologies designed and developed by the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces.

“The list is prepared by MoD after several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders, including the Armed Forces, public & private industry to assess current and future capabilities of the Indian industry for manufacturing various ammunition & equipment within India,” Mr. Singh said.

He added that almost 260 schemes of such items were contracted by the Tri-Services at an approximate cost of ₹3.5 lakh crore between

April 2015 and August 2020. It is estimated that contracts worth almost ₹4 lakh crore will be placed with the domestic industry within the next 6 to 7 years, he said.

“Of these, items worth almost ₹1,30,000 crore each are anticipated for the Army and the Air Force, while items worth almost ₹1,40,000 crore are anticipated for the Navy over the same period,” the Minister said.

The list of 101 embargoed items comprises of not just simple parts but also some high technology weapon systems like artillery guns, assault rifles, corvettes, sonar systems, transport aircrafts, LCHs, radars and many other items to fulfil the needs of the defence Services, Mr. Singh said.

The list also includes wheeled Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) with indicative import embargo date of December 2021, of which the Army is expected to contract almost 200 at an approximate cost of over ₹5,000 crore.

“The embargo on imports is planned to be progressively implemented between 2020 to 2024. Our aim is to apprise the Indian defence industry about the anticipated requirements of the Armed Forces so that they are better prepared to realise the goal of indigenisation. MoD has also bifurcated the capital procurement budget for 2020-21 between domestic and foreign capital procurement routes,” the tweet said.

## Idukki landslide toll rises to 43, many still missing

All the recovered bodies are being buried in a mass burial site at Pettimudy. A team of doctors are camping in the area and a mobile mortuary has been set up to conduct autopsies.

Forest Minister K. Raju who visited the spot said six Forest Department staff from the estate lanes were among the missing while the bodies of others had

been recovered. He promised assistance to the families of the victims.

Adverse climate and lack of electricity have also hampered the search operation. District Collector H. Dinesan said the search would continue in the coming days. “The area is muddy and with rain continuing, search operation is difficult,” he said.

# Fresh cases hit another high in Andhra Pradesh

10,820 people test positive in the State, 97 patients die; Karnataka fatalities up by 107; two more die in Kerala, toll now 108

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Andhra Pradesh on Sunday added another record number of COVID-19 cases at 10,820, and registered 97 deaths, raising the overall toll to 2,036 and case tally to 2,27,860.

Kerala reported 1,211 new cases on Sunday, 1,057 of



them locally acquired infections. The source of infection in 103 cases was unknown. Among health workers, 27 more tested positive. The cumulative cases were 34,331, with 12,347 patients under treatment in hospitals. There were 21,836 recoveries.

Two more deaths in Kasaragod and Ernakulam were added to the State toll, taking it to 108. Thiruvananthapuram district, a month after

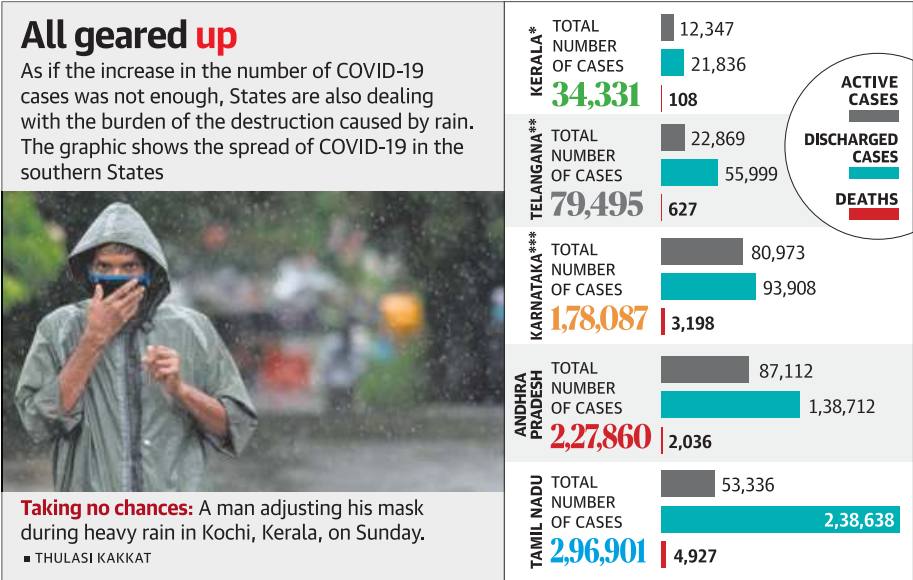
containment activities and lockdown were imposed, had a daily average of new cases in the 250-400 range. On Sunday, it reported 292 cases. The number of samples tested in the State in 24 hours was 22,745.

In Karnataka, a total of 5,985 new cases were reported on Sunday, raising the case total to 1,78,087.

A total of 107 deaths were reported, raising the figure of fatalities to 3,198. The Health and Family Welfare department said 678 patients of the total 80,973 active cases were in intensive care.

The spread of COVID-19 in districts besides Bengaluru was rising. While 41% of all cases were reported in Bengaluru, the rest were in 29 districts. Bengaluru reported 1,948 new cases, and five districts had over 200 cases.

Telangana inch closer to 80,000 cases as 1,982 more samples tested positive



\*Kerala has a mismatch of 44 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons | \*\*Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Sunday  
\*\*\*Karnataka has 8 non-COVID deaths

on Saturday, taking the total to 79,495. The toll touched 627 as 12 more patients died.

The tally of 79,495 included 22,869 active cases, of whom 55,999 recovered and

627 died. On Saturday, 22,925 tests were conducted and results of 1,509 were awaited.

In Andhra Pradesh, the positivity rate as of Sunday

was 9.16%. A total of 24,87,305 samples were tested, of which 62,912 were tested in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, four districts reported 10 or more deaths

## As heavy rain continues, more shifted to camps in Kerala

Car with driver swept away in Kottayam; man electrocuted in Erattupetta; six shutters of Pampa dam raised by 60 cm

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Torrential rain lashed most districts on Sunday, prompting district administrations to evacuate more families to relief camps.

Seven districts had been on red alert since Sunday morning with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting extremely heavy rainfall.

In Kottayam district, a taxi driver, identified as Justin Joy, 26, of Manjapra, was swept away by floodwater along with his car in the early hours of Sunday near Manarcaud. His body was recovered in the afternoon.

In Erattupettah, a man was electrocuted while cleaning a flooded shop. As many as 4,495 people have

been evacuated to 194 relief camps in Kottayam district.

In rain-battered Pathanamthitta district, six shutters of the Pampa dam have been raised by 60 cm. The swollen Manimala river continued to inundate low-lying areas.

### Missing

A person, identified as Rajan of Pramadam, has been reported missing in the Achencoil river. A total of 3,342 people have been shifted to 103 relief camps in the district.

Kuttanad in Alappuzha district is facing the threat of another deluge with seven bund breaches occurring over the weekend and floodwater continuing to pour in from the east.

Floodwater has started re-



**Picking up the pieces:** Rescue operations being conducted at Pettimala, near Munnar in Kerala. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ceding from the highlands and midlands of Wayanad. The district reported a brief respite from the heavy rain on Sunday.

Vehicle movement resumed on the Kozhikode-Kollegal national highway 766 after water receded from the low-lying banks of the Nugu

river. Following heavy rain, 491 persons have been evacuated to camps in Kannur.

### Rivers in spate

In Palakkad and Malappuram, most of the rivers are in spate. In Kozhikode, around 700 people have been shifted to relief camps.

## Man drowns in Karnataka

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BELAGAVI

A young man drowned in the Ballari Nala river in Karnataka's Belagavi district on Sunday.

Nagaraj Hebballi, 19, had been washed away in the stream on Saturday night. State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel found his body around two

kilometres away from his village.

Hebballi went to his field to retrieve his irrigation pump set that he had connected to the stream on Saturday night. When he did not return, his relatives told the police who alerted the SDRF force in Gokak. A case has been registered in Ankalgali police station.

## ‘Design based on temple art’

Architects for Telangana Secretariat inspired by temples

### M. RAJEEV HYDERABAD

The proposed new Secretariat complex, the design for which was approved by the Telangana Cabinet recently, draws inspiration from a few major temples in the State.

The ideas and inspiration of the domes on the façade of the imposing new complex are drawn from major temples – the Neelakanteshwara temple and Hanuman temple at Salangpur, Wana-parthy, and the thousand pillars temple at Hanamkonda. The architecture firm, Oscar and Ponni Architects, which prepared the design for the new Secretariat, said the overall design philosophy and the exterior architectural character were fusion and synthesis of diverse cul-



Neelakanteshwara temple at Salangpur. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tures and heritage of the dynamic history of Telangana.

“We have extensively studied temple architecture and prepared the design with architectural styles predominantly of the Deccan Kakatiya style,” Ponni Concessao of the Oscar and Ponni Architects told *The Hindu*. According to Ms. Ponni, the planning concept was en-

tirely vastu-compliant and the design inspiration was two-fold, the cultural and architectural style of Telangana and the other was Lord Siva with specific reference to the Neelakanteshwara temple.

The statement assumes significance in the light of the criticism by the opposition BJP that the design was aimed at appeasing a particular section of society.

## 14 injured air passengers continue to be critical

57 have been discharged from hospitals

### STAFF REPORTER MALAPPURAM

The condition of 14 persons who were injured in Friday's Air India Express B-737 flight crash at Karipur continued to be “extremely serious” on Sunday. They are being treated in Kozhikode and Malappuram districts.

District Collector K. Gopalakrishnan said 115 persons were undergoing treatment in various hospitals and 57 persons were discharged on Saturday and Sunday.

### COVID-19 case

Eighteen persons, including the two pilots and four children, were killed when the flight from Dubai overshoot the runway and fell into a

valley while landing at the Karipur airport at 7.45 p.m. on Friday. One of the victims had tested positive for COVID-19. There were 184 passengers and six crew members on the flight.

### Probe begins

The police have begun an investigation into the accident. A special investigation team under the supervision of Addl. SP Sabu G. was set up. Dy.SP Haridas P.C. will lead the 30-member investigation team. Asst. SP Hemalata, Inspectors K.M. Biju, Shibu, Sunish P. Thankachan, and cybercell experts are part of the team. A case was registered at the Karipur police Station under IPC 337, 338, 304 A, and Section 11 of the Aircraft Act.

## High-level panel to probe fire accident

Preliminary inquiry points to negligence by hospital management: Minister

### STAFF REPORTER VIJAYAWADA

Preliminary inquiry suggests negligence on the part of Ramesh Hospitals in the fire accident at Hotel Swarna Palace, which the former had taken on lease to operate a COVID-19 care centre, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Health Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas (Nani) has said.

Ten patients died and many others were injured in the blaze at the hotel on Sunday.

The Health Minister, along with Home Minister M. Sucharitha, I&PR Minister Perni Venkataramiah, District Collector A.Md. Imtiaz and Police



**Clean-up begins:** Health workers sanitising the premises of Hotel Swarna in Vijayawada on Sunday. ■K.V.S. GIRI

Commissioner B. Srinivasulu, reviewed the situation. “A committee, comprising officials drawn from the police, medical and health, and fire departments and experts, has been constituted. It will submit its inquiry report in 48 hours,

and action will be taken based on the report,” Mr. Srinivas said.

The committee would also inquire into how Ramesh Hospitals took the hotel on lease and whether it provided ventilators, emergency equipment and necessary critical care units in the hotel

### Couple among victims dead in hotel fire

#### VIJAYAWADA

Among the patients who died in the fire accident were a couple from Jaggaiahpetta mandal, S. Ratna Abraham, 48, and his wife Rajakumari. Though the husband was discharged on Saturday, he returned to the hospital to take care of his wife.

rooms, he added.

The Vijayawada Central Tahsildar (Mandal Revenue Officer) lodged a complaint with the Governorpet police, following which a case had been registered under IPC Sections 304 (II) and Section 308. Investigation is under way.

## No compromise on share of Krishna water, says Minister

Telangana has already filed a petition in SC, says Rama Rao

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister for Industries, IT and Urban Development, K.T. Rama Rao, on Sunday said Telangana's cordial relations with Andhra Pradesh would not hinder its fight for the rightful share of Krishna water.

Mr. Rama Rao made the statement in response to a question posed to him as part of “Ask KTR” session on a social media platform where he responded to netizens' questions on wide-ranging issues. Replying to a question on the Telangana government's stand on Andhra Pradesh's plans to divert



K.T. Rama Rao

huge quantity of Krishna water, he said there would be no compromise on the State's interests and the government had already filed a special leave petition in the Supreme Court.

Asked about the fleeing of COVID-19 patients by priv-

ate hospitals in Hyderabad, making them frightened with huge bills for treatment, the Minister said the government had already taken action against a few hospitals indulging in unfair practices and promised more action. He, however, asked people “to respect and recognise the efforts of government sector professionals.”

He said government hospitals across the State were offering services even when private hospitals were refusing treatment. “It's the government healthcare professionals who are taking up such cases,” Mr. Rao said.

### IN BRIEF



### Karnataka Minister tests positive for COVID-19

#### BENGALURU

Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister B. Sriramulu, who tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday, was admitted in the State-run Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital here. The Minister took to Twitter to state that he developed a fever and decided to get himself tested on Sunday. Results revealed that he had tested positive for COVID-19. Hospital authorities said that the Minister's health was improving.

### Minor fire breaks out on ship in Visakhapatnam

#### VISAKHAPATNAM

A minor fire accident took place in a vessel at the Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT), here on Sunday. No one was injured. The incident occurred on the BD51 vessel berthed on West Quay - 5, for crew sign-on and sign-off. Around 2 p.m., the crew found the crew change room engulfed in smoke and alerted the fire brigade. Short-circuit is suspected to be the cause. Officials said there was no damage to the vessel.

### Man pronounces talaq over social media, held

#### MANGALURU

The police in Udupi district have arrested a person on the charge of pronouncing triple talaq to his wife through Facebook. The police gave the name of the arrested as Sheikh Mohammed Saleem. The police said Saleem had married Swapnaz in Shirva in September 2010. The two stayed in Saudi Arabia. On August 3, Saleem flew to Mumbai along with a woman. He then posted on his Facebook profile an audio pronouncing talaq thrice.

IN BRIEF



Trade unions oppose 'anti-worker' policies

NEW DELHI  
Central trade unions (CTUs) on Sunday held protests across the country against the Centre's "anti-worker, anti-farmer, anti-people and anti-national" policies, including the planned privatisation of some PSUs and commercialisation of some sectors, including coal mining, a statement by the joint platform of CTUs said. Workers' associations of different sectors joined the demonstrations held under the banner, "Save India Day," it said.

Allow homeopathic drugs for COVID-19, says plea

NEW DELHI  
Homeopaths have urged the Supreme Court to direct the Centre to allow the administration of homeopathic medicines for mild cases of COVID-19 and as an add-on to allopathic drugs in severe cases. The petitioners said they had given a representation to the Prime Minister, proposing the "development of 'noso-CoV', which they had introduced as a homoeo prophylaxis to prevent COVID-19.

Invite requests for 'senior advocate' title: Jaising

NEW DELHI  
Senior advocate Indira Jaising has urged the Supreme Court to brush off its 'inertia' and invite applications from lawyers for conferment of "senior advocate" designation. In an application filed in the court, Ms. Jaising, who was the country's first woman Additional Solicitor General, suggested that the court could initiate the designation process online during the pandemic. It could conduct virtual interviews of the candidates.

INTERVIEW | SHASHI THAROOR

‘We should be clear about our leadership’

Congress MP says election to the post of president will have beneficial outcomes

SOBHANA K. NAIR

Senior Congress leader and Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor has called for elections to the Congress Working Committee and the post of president to challenge the perception of the party being "adrift and rudderless, incapable of taking up the challenge of a credible national Opposition".

Sonia Gandhi completes a year as Congress president. This was supposed to be an ad hoc arrangement. But so far there is no clarity on what the party will do on August 10. What are your personal views on the way forward for the party?

I certainly believe we should be clear about our leadership going forward. I welcomed Soniaji's appointment as interim president last year but I do believe it's unfair to her to expect her to carry this burden indefinitely.

My own personal view, which as you know I have been advocating for some time now, is that elections to the CWC and for the post of president would certainly have a number of beneficial outcomes for the party.

A participatory democratic process would significantly add to the incoming leader's credibility and legitimacy which, in turn, would be vital assets as they set about the significant organisational challenges asso-

ciated with re-energising the rank and file of the party.

You have repeatedly called for an open election within the party, a sort of public event, which you said would galvanise the party cadres. The history of the Congress, however, does not really stand by your proposition. The party has repeatedly picked the family over others. Your comments. I think the question mixes up two different issues. Obviously, the Nehru-Gandhi family holds a special place in the hearts of Congress party members – and with good reason too.

Aside from the great legacy they have inherited from their illustrious forebears, they have consistently brought together the various groups, ideologies, geographies and communities that collectively make up the fabric of the Congress party.

They also have a clear record of success and experience in leading the party, both when in government and during tough times in the wilderness, when they have still managed to rally the men and women of the Congress together.

Let us not forget the magnitude of what they have achieved for the party – or the ultimate sacrifice paid by two former presidents from the family.

So, if Rahul Gandhi is ready to resume the leadership, all he has to do is to with-

draw his resignation. He was elected to serve till December 2022 and can just pick up the reins again. It would be a popular outcome among the rank and file of the party. But if he does not, we have to find another solution. That's what I am talking about.

How dangerous is it for the party to continue to coast along in this manner without a clarity about leadership? As I have often pointed out, the challenge is that there appears to be a growing public perception, fuelled by a dismissive media, that the Congress is adrift and rudderless, incapable of taking up the challenge of a credible national Opposition. That is precisely what we need to urgently address by expediting the process of finding a full-term president.

Once this is done, we can also move towards identifying solutions to other areas such as organisational challenges, revitalising the party particularly in the States that we have not been performing well in recently, energising the rank and file of our membership and so on.



It's unfair to Sonia Gandhi to expect her to carry the burden indefinitely

draw his resignation. He was elected to serve till December 2022 and can just pick up the reins again. It would be a popular outcome among the rank and file of the party. But if he does not, we have to find another solution. That's what I am talking about.

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Once this is done, we can also move towards identifying solutions to other areas such as organisational challenges, revitalising the party particularly in the States that we have not been performing well in recently, energising the rank and file of our membership and so on.

Should Rahul Gandhi return to the helm withdrawing his resignation?

I, for one, would be delighted if he did. Just look at the active and dynamic leadership these last few months. Through his activities during this lockdown, whether it has been on the issue of the COVID-19 virus or Chinese transgressions, Rahul Gandhi has without a question and almost single-handedly done a remarkable job in holding the present government accountable for its actions and failures. He has also displayed tremendous foresight and vision, been a constructive voice that has offered critical inputs and has shown an impressive capability to really understand the aspirations of the people during these challenging times. I hope he will continue doing that, whether as president or in any other capacity of his choosing. I certainly think he has the mettle, capability and aptitude to again lead the party, given the widespread admiration and support he enjoys among the rank and file.

chemical in the night," Mr. Barhat said, adding that there was a smell of some chemical in the hut. There were no injury marks on any of the bodies or any evidence of foul play, he said.

The family came to India in 2015. They had been living in the village farm for the past six months.

PM launches farm infra scheme

₹17,000 crore released to about 8.5 crore farmers under PM-KISAN plan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a new financing scheme under the ₹1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund meant for setting up storage and processing facilities, which will help farmers get higher prices for their crops, according to the government statement.

Mr. Modi launched the scheme via videoconferencing and interacted with farmers across the country. He also released the sixth instalment of funds under the PM-KISAN scheme, which amounted to ₹17,000 crore to about 8.5 crore farmers. The first ₹1,000 crore was sanctioned on Sunday to over 2,280 farmer societies under the Agriculture Infra-



Big boost: Narendra Modi addressing the nation at the launch of the financing scheme on Sunday. ■PTI

structure Fund, which was approved by the Cabinet a month ago, the statement said.

"The scheme will support farmers, PACS [primary agricultural credit societies], FPOs [farmer producer organisations], agri-entre-

preneurs, etc. in building community farming assets and post-harvest agriculture infrastructure. These assets will enable farmers to get greater value for their produce as they will be able to store and sell at higher prices, reduce wastage, and in-

crease processing and value addition," the statement said.

During the launch, Mr. Modi spoke to representatives from three PACS from Karnataka, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, who are beneficiaries of the scheme. He later addressed the country. Mr. Modi said the scheme would give farmers and the agriculture sector a boost and "increase India's ability to compete on the global stage".

Mr. Modi reiterated that "India has a huge opportunity to invest in post-harvest management solutions like warehousing, cold chain, and food processing, and build a global presence in areas such as organic and fortified foods," the statement said.

Confusion prevails over Sonia's term

She will head Congress till a successor is elected, says party spokesperson

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The confusion over Sonia Gandhi's tenure as the president of the Congress continued, with some quarters calling for a more permanent arrangement and a section of the party insisting that there is no fixed tenure for an interim president. Ms. Gandhi's tenure ends on Monday.

At an online press conference, party spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi said Ms. Gandhi would continue to be president till a procedure was implemented to bring in her successor. "Just like nature, political parties too can't function in a vacuum. It is true that her tenure



Sonia Gandhi

expires tomorrow, there is a laid-down procedure for elections. In the meanwhile, if anyone is suggesting that the Congress will become headless at the stroke of midnight on August 10, is that a fair interpretation?" he said.

Lok Sabha member Shashi Tharoor said the party must have elections to the Congress Working Commit-

tee and to the post of president. "I certainly believe we should be clear about our leadership going forward. I welcomed Soniaji's appointment as interim president last year but I do believe it's unfair to her to expect her to carry this burden indefinitely," he said.

A senior party functionary told *The Hindu* that the tenure is not tied down by any deadline. The party constitution, he said, says if the elected president steps down, the senior-most general secretary or anyone that the Congress Working Committee selects can take over for an interim period.

He also clarified that the party does not have to in-

form the Election Commission, because it is an internal matter.

Rahul not in the race

Sources indicate that Rahul Gandhi is not planning to return as president as the conditions which forced him to resign still persist. In his resignation letter on July 3 last year, Mr. Gandhi had called for accountability for the defeat of the party in the 2019 polls, and said "at times I stood alone", referring to the Lok Sabha campaign.

However, in the last few months, he has attended key meetings of the party, including chairing a strategy meeting on the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls.

Gehlot calls on all MLAs to 'stand by the truth'

Rajasthan CM writes to legislators ahead of House session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

Ahead of the crucial Rajasthan Assembly session which could witness a floor test, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday wrote a letter to all MLAs appealing to them to "stand by the truth" and defeat the attempts being made to topple his government.

Mr. Gehlot sought the cooperation of all MLAs, cutting across party lines, in fulfilling the promises for the State's development. "People's mandate is the supreme command. I expect you to understand the sentiments of your family members and the electorate of your constituencies to ensure that the government elected by the people continues to work," he said.

"Victory and defeat are part of elections. You may be an MLA from any political party but you should stand by the truth and act in the larger interests of people," he said, adding that Prime



Ashok Gehlot

Ministers like Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee faced defeats but they never allowed democratic traditions to weaken.

The Congress government is likely to seek a confidence vote during the Assembly session, beginning on August 14, amid the political turmoil caused by the rebellion of former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot and 18 MLAs supporting him. Though Mr. Gehlot seems confident of majority, the legislators supporting him have been sequestered at a resort near Jaipur.

The Chief Minister said six BSP MLAs had joined the

Congress last year by following all norms and in the interest of a stable government. While the merger was within the parameters of law, there was no justification for the attempts to destabilise the government by horse-trading of MLAs, he said.

'Big split in the BJP'

Mr. Gehlot questioned the shifting of BJP MLAs to Gujarat and alleged that the party was ridden with factionalism. "I can see a big split in the BJP... They are setting the traditions which are dangerous for democracy," he told. The BJP has sent 18 of its MLAs in the last two days to the party-ruled Gujarat.

On the Special Operation Group notices sent to some of the rebel MLAs in connection with the alleged horse-trading, Mr. Gehlot said the agencies just wanted to talk to them but it was projected as if a sedition case had been registered against them.

Interim order on contempt case today

by Justice Arun Mishra, had reserved the case for orders on August 4 after an almost day-long hearing that was not accessible to the media. Video and audio links were snapped during the hearing.

A two-page judicial order published later in the day said the court was yet to receive the "explanation/apology submitted" by Mr. Bhushan and Mr. Tejpal.

The Bench had noted in its order that it would go on to hear the contempt case if

"we do not accept the explanation/apology".

A communication released by Mr. Bhushan's office late on August 4 said the Bench had talked to the lawyers in the case via a WhatsApp call.

It said Mr. Bhushan had refused to apologise and said the word "corruption" was used in the interview in a wide sense to mean "lack of propriety". He had not meant that the judiciary was financially corrupt.

**TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED**  
**e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**  
The Transmission Corporation of A.P. Limited invites on line bids for the following works.  

Sl. No.	Specification No.	Name of the work	Date of Tender documents availability on On-Line
1	PMM21-e- 17 /2020	Lot: Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 3 Nos. 500 MVA, 400/220/33kV, 3 phase Auto Transformers required at 400kV Jammalamadugu Substations	Dt.10.08.2020 at 17.00 Hrs.

NOTE : i) Name & address of the officer inviting tenders - Chief Engineer/Transmission, APTRANSCO, Vidyut Soudha, Vijayawada. ii) The contractors / firms are requested to upload the information in the Zip format preferably. iii) Further details can be seen in website(s) : [www.eprocurement.gov.in](http://www.eprocurement.gov.in) ce.aptransmission@gmail.com.  
DIPR 234P/CL, Dt: 06-08-2020 Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER, TRANSMISSION

**BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD**  
Office of the Chief Engineer (Waste Water Management)  
5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G.Road, Bangalore - 560 009.  
IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(WWM)/ACE(WWM)-2/TA/2891/2020-21 Date: 04.08.2020  
**INVITATION FOR TENDER**  
(Only through e-procurement portal)  
BWSSB invites tenders in two cover System from eligible tenderers for the work of **Providing and laying of 700/800mm dia NP-3 Class Sewer pipeline from Shethihalli Tank to Madrahalli ISPS.**  
Amount put to tender : **Rs. 486.03 Lakhs. EMD: Rs. 7.29 Lakhs.**  
The last date & time for receipt of tenders: **08.09.2020 upto 17:30 Hrs.** The Technical bids will be opened on: **10.09.2020 at 16:00Hrs.** The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. For further details contact the undersigned officer during working hours.  
Sd/-  
Chief Engineer(WWM).

**ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY**  
Ref : AU/GUCC/RUSA 2.0/AIC/Network Equipment/Tender/02/2019-20  
Date : 10.08.2020  
**TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
For and on behalf of Annamalai University, sealed tenders are invited separately for the following equipment/items/work for the Annamalai University, Annamalaiagar from the Indian Companies of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM)/Authorized Dealers/Authorized Distributors.  
Tender document can be downloaded from the website of Annamalai University [www.annamalaiuniversity.ac.in](http://www.annamalaiuniversity.ac.in) and [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in).  

S.No.	Particulars
1	Active & Passive Components of Networking Materials
2	Accessories for the structuring materials
3	Digging and Laying of OFC Cables

a)	Tender Fee	Rs.2,100/- for each Tender
b) <td>Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.)</td> <td>Networking Materials 70,000 Structuring Materials 15,000 Digging and Laying of OFC Cable 30,000</td>	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs.)	Networking Materials 70,000 Structuring Materials 15,000 Digging and Laying of OFC Cable 30,000
c) <td>Last date and time for receipt of tender</td> <td>28.08.2020 – 5.00 p.m.</td>	Last date and time for receipt of tender	28.08.2020 – 5.00 p.m.
d) <td>Date, time and Venue of Opening of tender</td> <td>29.08.2020 – 10.30 a.m. Syndicate Room, Examination Wing, Annamalai University, Annamalaiagar – 600 002.</td>	Date, time and Venue of Opening of tender	29.08.2020 – 10.30 a.m. Syndicate Room, Examination Wing, Annamalai University, Annamalaiagar – 600 002.

Registrar  
Annamalai University  
DIPR/2985/Tender/2020

**TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS: TIRUPATI OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER e- TENDER**  
e-tenders are invited by the TTD for procurement of the following equipments for the BIRRD Trust Hospital, TTD, Tirupati. For tender notice and tender details log on to the Web site <http://www.tirumala.org> and <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in>. To get related information click on current tenders and select "more" and "Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams", Superintending Engineer-I (circle). For further details Contact Telephone: 08772264400.  

NIT No.	Name of the item	Period of Contract	Date of Tender
38/SEI/ TTD/ 2020-21	1.5 - Tesla Magnetic Resonance imaging (MRI) system (with CMC)	3 Months along with 5 years Warranty (with CMC)	From 10-8-2020 to 27-8-2020 03:00 PM
39/SEI/ TTD/ 2020-21	CT Scan Machine	3 Months along with 5 years Warranty (with CMC)	From 10-8-2020 to 27-8-2020 03:00 PM
40/SEI/ TTD/ 2020-21	Mobile X-Ray Machine	3 Months along with 5 years Warranty (with CMC)	From 13-8-2020 to 28-8-2020 03:00 PM
41/SEI/ TTD/ 2020-21	X-Ray (800 mA) machine with DR System	3 Months along with 5 years Warranty (with CMC)	From 13-8-2020 to 28-8-2020 03:00 PM
42/SEI/ TTD/ 2020-21	Arthroscopy capital equipment	3 Months along with 5 years Warranty (with CMC)	From 14-8-2020 to 29-8-2020 03:00PM
43/SEI/ TTD/ 2020-21	Ortho Drill Systems	3 Months	From 14-8-2020 to 29-8-2020 03:00PM

Detailed NIT terms can be downloaded from APTS website: <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in/> and for further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264400. Mobile number: 9704678512 eMail ID: se1.ttdt@gmail.com  
Roc.No.PRA/13921/Adv.No.95/PRO/2020; Dated:09-08-2020 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, P.H.E.D. DN. BAYTU, DISST. BARMER**  
No. EE/PHED/BAYTU/2020-21/1150-1165 Date:- 04/08/2020  
NIT No.2020-21/18  
NIB Code PHE2021A2463  
Online tenders are invited on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan for the following works from enlisted contractors with the PHED Rajasthan and meeting eligibility criteria, Contractors enlisted with other Departments of Government of Rajasthan and enlisted with CPWD/Postal, Telecom, Railway, MES, Other State Govt./Central Govt, undertaking/organizations equivalent in Rajasthan meeting eligibility criteria may apply after giving prescribed Earnest Money. The tender documents can be downloaded from the website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. Details of this tender notification can also be seen in NIT exhibited on web site [www.dipronline.org](http://www.dipronline.org) & [spp.rajasthan.gov.in](http://spp.rajasthan.gov.in)  

Item No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Earnest Money (Rs. in lacs)	Tender Fee	Time Period
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Parallel Rate Contract of P/L/I and Commissioning of Internal distribution network and providing Functional House water Connection from already laid/ New distribution pipe line to property line including all material and all labour under jurisdiction of PHED Division Baytu District Barmer with 12 months defect liability period (PHE2021WSOB04404)	250.00	500000.00	2500.00	12 Months

Various critical dates of the tenders are as below:-  
Last date & time of downloading and bid Submission- 15.09.2020 upto 2.00 pm  
Date & time of opening of Physical Submission- 15.09.2020 upto 3.00 pm  
Date & time of opening of Technical bid- 15.09.2020 upto 4.00 pm  
Date & time of opening of financial bid- shall be intimated later through online  
(Babulal Meena)  
Executive Engineer  
P.H.E.D. Dn.Baytu Barmer  
DIPRC/6098

11 of Pak. Hindu family found dead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JODHPUR

Eleven members of a family of Pakistan Hindu migrants were found dead at a farm in Jodhpur on Sunday, police said.

Kewal Ram, 35, of the family, however, was found alive outside their hut at Lodta village of the Dechu

area, over 100 km away from Jodhpur city, an officer said. "But he claimed to have no idea about the incident, which is believed to have happened in the night," said SP (Rural) Rahul Barhat.

"We are yet to ascertain the cause of death. They appeared to have committed suicide by consuming some

chemical in the night," Mr. Barhat said, adding that there was a smell of some chemical in the hut. There were no injury marks on any of the bodies or any evidence of foul play, he said.

The family came to India in 2015. They had been living in the village farm for the past six months.

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II**  
Assignment Title: Construction Supervision Consultancy Services for upgradation of EPC 11, EPC 12, EPC 13 under Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) contracting mode for TNRSP II - Additional Financing.  
Reference No: 1953/2020/TNRSP II/SC05/AF/AE0 dated: 18.07.2020  
Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)  
Experienced Consultants are invited to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) for carrying out the above mentioned assignment. Further details and REOI are available in the website: [www.tnrspp.gov.in](http://www.tnrspp.gov.in).  
Last date for receipt of EOI: 31.08.2020 upto 15.00 hrs.  
Superintending Engineer (H),  
(For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)  
Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project II, Chennai-28,  
TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavaperumal Puram,  
Off Greenways Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai- 600 028, Tamil Nadu, India.  
Telephone No: +91 44 24951072, Email: [tnrsp1@gmail.com](mailto:tnrsp1@gmail.com) Website: [www.tnrspp.gov.in](http://www.tnrspp.gov.in)  
DIPR/2978/Tender/2020

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II**  
Assignment Title: Project Management Consultancy Services for Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project II - Additional Financing.  
Reference No: 2063/2020/TNRSP II/PMC/AE12 dated: 18.07.2020  
Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)  
Experienced Consultants are invited to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) for carrying out the above mentioned assignment. Further details and REOI are available in the website: [www.tnrspp.gov.in](http://www.tnrspp.gov.in).  
Last date for receipt of EOI: 10.09.2020 upto 15.00 hrs.  
Superintending Engineer (H),  
(For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)  
Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project II, Chennai-28,  
TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavaperumal Puram,  
Off Greenways Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai- 600 028, Tamil Nadu, India.  
Telephone No: +91 44 24951072, Email: [tnrsp1@gmail.com](mailto:tnrsp1@gmail.com) Website: [www.tnrspp.gov.in](http://www.tnrspp.gov.in)  
DIPR/2979/Tender/2020

# ‘LAC complicates India’s options’

America is not going to get involved in a continental war here, says ex-NSA

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

The threat from China is pushing India into closer ties with the U.S. but is unlikely to yield a military ‘alliance’ at present, said experts in Delhi and Washington during a discussion on Indian Foreign Policy. In particular, former National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon and academic Pratap Bhanu Mehta felt that India’s common boundary with China and “continental challenge” still complicates its choices, referring to the nearly four-month-long standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). “India can build coalitions, the Quad [Quadrilateral with U.S., Australia and Japan], or an alliance of democracies. But geography matters, proximity matters



Shiv Shankar Menon and the implication of China in our neighbourhood matters... Given our limited options, it is good that the government has not acted in haste,” said Mr. Mehta, a professor at Ashoka University, who praised the government’s recent economic actions aimed at China, including the restrictions on FDI and imports and banning of 59 software apps.

“We have a problem with China on land and the U.S. is not going to get involved in a continental war here. The [U.S.] is pulling out of Afghanistan. The landmass of Eurasia is being consolidated under China’s Belt and Road Initiative and by various other means, and even the Russians have decided they need to work with China. India needs to find a continental strategy that works for it as the relationship with China gets more and more adversarial,” said Mr. Menon.

‘Collective defence’ U.S.-based Carnegie Endowment expert Ashley Tellis, who served as a diplomat to India, said the U.S. would not seek an alliance with India unless both sides were “committed to a collective de-

fence” of each other in both the continental and maritime spheres. “It comes down to a very simple question: why would it be in America’s interest to provide those capabilities to India if it doesn’t feel that the quality of the relationship it has with India warrants it? That is still a work in progress. But if we don’t answer that question I don’t think [the U.S.] will get the partnership that makes our contribution worth the money,” Mr. Tellis said, adding that apart from “putting boots on the ground”, the U.S. could help India with intelligence sharing, space technology and air power support. The experts were part of a seminar organised by the Indo-American Friendship Association..

## Nepal, India in war of words over Buddha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Nepal is the land of origin of Lord Buddha, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu asserted on Sunday after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar described the founder of Buddhism as one of the greatest Indians ever. Former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal said Mr. Jaishankar’s comments about Lord Buddha were “objectionable”. “It is a well-established and undeniable fact proven by historical and archaeological evidence that Gautama Buddha was born in Lumbini, Nepal. Lumbini... is one of the UNESCO world heritage sites,” said the official spokesperson of the Ministry.

# ‘Overseas support was crucial for Khalistan groups’

Book sheds light on RAW operations against terror networks

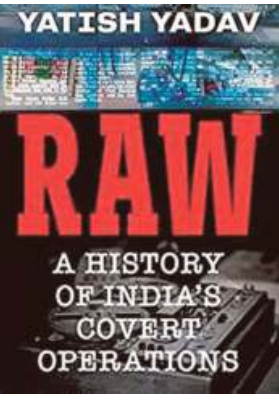
NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

As more and more foreign governments, including the United Kingdom and Canada, refuse support for Khalistani demands of a “Referendum 2020”, a new book sheds light on operations of India’s external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), in the face of earlier covert support by these countries for the Khalistani terror networks.

The book, *RAW: A History of India’s Covert Operations* by journalist Yatish Yadav, goes into much detail on not just how Khalistani terrorists operated offshore but also how foreign governments turned a blind eye and, in some cases, offered covert support to such groups. “The RAW didn’t believe U.S. authorities’ assurances that it would investigate the role of Khalistani extremists in Washington and New York,” says the book.

According to the book, a RAW operative – one “Dinesh Mathur” – managed to penetrate the networks in North America, and even managed to get to the terror movement’s leader Jagjit Singh Chouhan, and other top ranking members.

“In November 1988, Mathur had recruited a key Khal-



istani figure, Chatar Singh, who was living on Fairfax Road in Maryland,” says the book, describing in detail the large cache of arms in Singh’s basement and his eventual recruitment by the Indian spy agency.

“In a report in July 1989, based on information provided by Chatar, Mathur warned his top bosses in Delhi about the financial support extended to a few Panthic committees from the U.S.A and Canada. The leaders from the committees were operating from Pakistan and safe havens in Nepal. He described the U.S. and Canada-based leaders of the movement as the fountainhead of Punjab’s insurgency,” says the book.

Recruitment of U.S. lobbyists, politicians for propaganda purposed by pro-

Khalistani outfits abroad was also deemed very harmful to India in efforts to build a case in international fora against Khalistani terror groups.

Mixed bag Lessons from the agencies’ mixed bag of success and failure in handling the Khalistani terror groups, are now being sought to be implemented as the hardsell over “Referendum 2020” has begun.

A proposal has been moved by the government extending immunity to cyber decoys recruited to counter propaganda and criminal activities in the virtual world. A decision to set up a joint counter operations centre involving the R&AW, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Punjab Police, has been taken.

Most important, in a meeting of top officials in 2019, hiring of retired officers and spies, who had served in Punjab during the Khalistan movement, has also been approved.

The events of the turbulent 1980s when the country was almost torn asunder due to separatist movements in Punjab and Assam is vividly described in the book.

## Rahul hits out at Modi govt. over job losses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Nearly 14 crore people have been rendered unemployed because of the “ill-conceived policies” of the Narendra Modi government, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in a video message, launching the Indian Youth Congress’s campaign, ‘rozgar do’ (provide employment) on Sunday. He urged unemployed youths to raise their voices and “awaken the government from its slumber”.

“When Narendra Modi ji became PM, he promised that he would give employment to 2 crore people every year. He sold them a very big dream. The truth is 14 crore people have been made jobless,” he said.

Mr. Gandhi blamed three policies – Demonetisation, faulty implementation of GST and extended lockdown – for “destroying” India’s economy.

# Aide of Mukhtar Ansari shot dead

Family of the deceased Rakesh Pandey alleges he was pulled out from home

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh police shot dead an aide of jailed MLA Mukhtar Ansari from Mau in an alleged exchange of fire after the SUV he was purportedly travelling in along with four other suspects crashed into a tree in the early hours of Sunday in Lucknow.

The family of the deceased Rakesh Pandey alias Hanuman Pandey, however, accused the police of picking him up from home in Lucknow and then killing him.

Co-accused in murder Pandey had been a co-accused in the 2005 murder of then BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai. However, in 2019 he along with MLA Mukhtar Ansari and six others was acquitted in the case by a special CBI court in Delhi.

Around 4.20 a.m. on Sunday, an SUV carrying Pandey and four others was inter-



Mukhtar Ansari. ■FILE PHOTO.

cepted and followed near the Shaheed Path in Lucknow by STF teams from Varanasi and Lucknow on inputs by informants, police said.

The U.P. STF said it received an input that along with his gang members Pandey was collecting weapons to execute a crime and intercepted him travelling towards Kanpur road.

During the chase, the SUV crashed into a tree near Sarojini Nagar following which the suspects fired at the police team, said SSP STF Sudhir Singh. “In the cross-firing, one accused got shot,” Mr. Singh told reporters, adding that Pandey was declared “brought dead” at a hospital. However, in a statement issued later, the STF said an injured Pandey was rushed to the CHC Sarojini Nagar where he died during treatment.

SSP Singh said Pandey was a “dreaded shooter of Mukhtar Ansari”. The STF said he carried a bounty of ₹50,000 in an attempt-to-murder case in Prayagraj.

The other four suspects fled taking cover against a drain, said Mr. Singh. In the STF press statement, however, police said the other suspects took advantage of the dark and fled.

They also did not state how many persons were in the car.

The STF said Pandey had

12 criminal cases and was out on bail in a case.

Police accused him of managing criminal and land-related activities for Mr. Ansari after alleged gangster Prem Prakash Singh alias Munna Bajrangi was shot dead inside the premises of Baghpat jail by another inmate in 2018.

Baldutt Pandey, Rakesh Pandey’s father, said his son was pulled out of his residence by police in Lucknow around 3 a.m. Since Rakesh’s mother was unwell and getting treated at a Lucknow hospital, he had been in the city to take care of her. She was discharged only a couple of days ago and he was taking care of her, he said.

While police said Rakesh had 12 criminal cases against him, his father said he had no [pending] cases as all had been decided. He also said he had never heard about any bounty being declared on his son.

# Andaman and Nicobar will be a maritime hub: Modi

PM will inaugurate a submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and the islands today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday the Andaman and Nicobar islands region, owing to its strategic importance, was going to be developed as a “maritime and startup hub” and highlighted his government’s development initiatives for it.

He said this during a video link with BJP workers from the Union Territory a day before he is to inaugurate a submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and islands.

“The region will no longer

face any problem in getting virtually connected to the outside world.”

The BJP has projected the inauguration of the submarine optical fibre as the islands turning “digitally independent” on August 10.

High-impact projects “The region will play an important role in our government’s self-reliant India project and the growth of new India,” Mr. Modi said highlighting the Andaman archipelago’s significance in the freedom movement.

He said 12 islands of the ar-



Narendra Modi

chipelago have been selected for high-impact projects with an emphasis on boosting trade of sea-based, organic and coconut-based

products of the region.

He said the proposed transshipment hub in the Andamans will help the group of islands become an important centre of blue economy and a maritime and startup hub.

Over 300 km of national highway is expected to be completed in record time, he said, adding his government is working to improve air connectivity within these islands and between them and the rest of the country.

Noting that his government has brought in more education facilities, includ-

ing law and medical colleges, to the region, Mr. Modi asked the BJP workers to inform the masses about the changes the Central government has ushered in and how things were earlier.

BJP president J.P. Nadda, who also addressed the meeting, hailed PM Modi for his work in dealing with the pandemic. The daily testing has risen to five lakh from 1,500 earlier, he said.

Andaman and Nicobar BJP leader Vishal Jolly highlighted the high COVID-19 infection rate among the local population.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India has refused a request by Pakistan to hold a meeting on issues around the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) at the Attari checkpoint near the India-Pakistan border. In March India had suggested a virtual conference but Pakistan had insisted on a physical meeting, a senior official in the Ministry of Water Resources told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

“Because of restrictions on movement in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, travelling to the border for a meeting isn’t advisable,” the official added.

The last such meeting between the two countries was in October in Islamabad, and, as per the agreement in the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), a meeting was to be scheduled in India before March 31.

The practice at the IWT meetings is that they are led by Indus Water Commissioners from both countries and a range of issues on construction of dams and hydropower projects concern-



Indus river in Leh. ■PTI

ing the Indus river system are discussed.

However the COVID-19 pandemic led to the meeting being cancelled and this was followed up by discussions between representatives of the two countries on how discussions could be conducted.

Among the key points on the table was evolving a procedure to solve differences on technical aspects governing the construction of the Ratle run-of-the-river (RoR) project on the Chenab in the Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir.

India has called for the appointment of a ‘neutral’ party while Pakistan favours a Court of Arbitration to

agree upon a final resolution on the design parameters of this hydropower project.

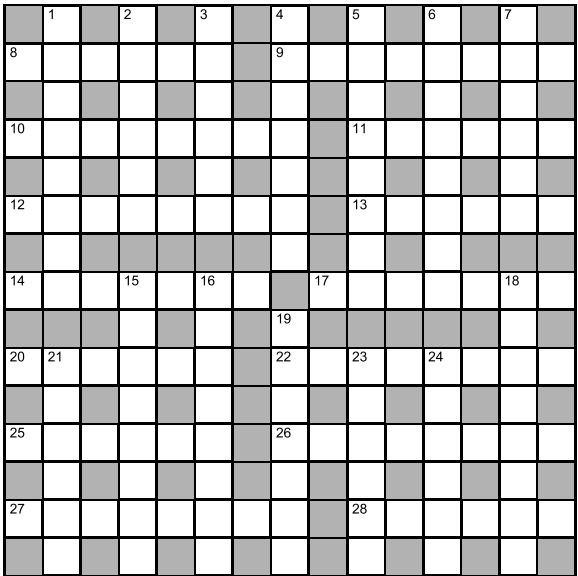
According to the terms of the IWT, India has the right to build RoR projects on the three ‘western’ rivers – the Chenab, Jhelum and Indus – provided it does so without substantially impeding water flow in Pakistan downstream. Pakistan believes that the project’s current design does pose a serious impediment and has told the World Bank that it wants a Court of Arbitration (CoA) set up to decide on the issue. India says this is only a technical issue and mutually solvable. It has agreed to a ‘neutral party’ since a CoA potentially could stall any construction on all Indus projects, the official said.

The IWT has been in existence since 1960, and reached a flash point in the aftermath of the Uri attacks in 2016 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi declaring that “blood and water couldn’t flow together” and India would utilise the full hydropower capacity of its share of the Indus systems.

## THE CROSSWORD + 13010

(set by Hypatia)

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@ <https://qrqo.page.link/jjpTn>



### ■ ACROSS

- 8 Cosmic oil from sweetheart in work area (6)
- 9 Doctor No and old fellows switch positions (2,3,3)
- 10 Elaborate shelf (5,3)
- 11 Time worked in Church, reflected one’s upbringing? (6)
- 12 Threatening sibling drinking at home (8)
- 13 Bachelor saint abdicates Ashram built for creator (6)

- 14 She drills teeth from behind model to fill cavity (7)
- 17 Crooked Es replaced by Is in broadcast message (7)
- 20 Bird beef (6)
- 22 It is very hard auditing Telco run dumbly (8)
- 25 Initially small children use leftover Plasticine to model (6)
- 26 The French annoyed by English game (8)
- 27 Learned twisting for pen covers (8)
- 28 Soft catcall entertains students (6)

### ■ DOWN

- 1 Cops have essentially put a bit of tincture in bandage (8)
- 2 Miniature plant or shrub on Saif’s show (6)
- 3 Very old bear dressed for dance (6)
- 4 Unfashionable to restore clothes in fashion (7)
- 5 What violinists do during and after a show? (4, 1,3)
- 6 From the side of women, say raised in English times (8)
- 7 Maintain fine tree in the morning time (6)
- 15 Realistic, I felt terrible about regret (4,4)
- 16 Inspect rumours featuring variety (8)
- 18 Paint bird eating small animal (8)
- 19 Block 0-100 – clued terribly (7)
- 21 Video log (6)
- 23 Fly on Hypatia’s flower arrangement (6)
- 24 Not any old masala with Oriental pasta (6)

## SUDOKU

8	4						9	
		2		7	9			8
							5	6
				6		9		
	5	9				8	6	
		3		1				
3	7							
5			4	3		7		
	1						8	9

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

### Solution to puzzle 13009

A	A	U	I	L	I	A	R	V	E	R	B	S
D	N	N	N	A	E	U	U					
E	N	D	E	N	E	P	O	T	I	S	T	S
C	E	E	A	T	T	E	E	P				
A	C	R	O	N	Y	M	S	L	E	S	S	E
M	T	T	E	I	D							
P	L	A	N	E	T	O	I	D	S	E	D	I
K	D	N	E	B								
R	H	E	A	P	L	E	A	S	A	N	T	E
E	D	I	Y	A	S	A	E					
D	I	S	P	E	L							
U	W	S	S	S	L	N	A					
C	H	E	A	P	S	H	O	T	I	T	E	M
E	L	O	I	J	C	R	H					
R	E	L	A	T	I	V	E	C	L	A	U	S

### Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

5	4	8	6	2	7	3	1	9
7	2	1	3	9	5	4	8	6
6	3	9	1	4	8	2	7	5
9	1	2	5	7	4	8	6	3
8	5	3	2	6	9	1	4	7
4	6	7	8	1	3	5	9	2
3	7	5	4	8	6	9	2	1
2	9	4	7	3	1	6	5	8
1	8	6	9	5	2	7	3	4

## FAITH

# Vyasa advises Arjuna

The incident of Arjuna realising the loss of his renowned prowess and powers as an invincible warrior is narrated by Suta in the Devi Bhagavata Purana. Though it is difficult to believe this truth, and still more difficult to accept it, he is enlightened about his self by Vyasa, pointed out Sri K. Srinivasan in a discourse. The Pandavas are steeped in untold grief on learning of the departure of Krishna and Balarama from this world.

Yudhishtira asks Arjuna to go to Dwaraka to console the aged parents of Krishna, and His consorts. Since Dwaraka is in imminent danger of getting submerged in the seas, Arjuna makes arrangements to move the people out of Dwaraka. He plans to take them to Hastinapura. But on the way, the caravan is attacked by dacoits who take away gold, jewellery and even the women. Arjuna is unable to stop the plunder. He finds that his gandibha of unflinching prowess is no longer so. Arjuna feels most frustrated and disappointed at the pale reflection of his hitherto invincible self. Vyasa explains to him the truth that he and Krishna are Nara and Narayana, the ancient divine gods. Arjuna’s powers are owing to Krishna and since the avatar is over, the powers have left him. He tells him that whenever Nara and Narayana are to incarnate the powers will automatically be with them. Nara and Narayana are very powerful and unconquerable in battle. They are also the best of the ancient rishis.

Yudhishtira and the Pandavas understand the inevitable effects of time where change alone is the most abiding factor in the universe. The old order changes to give place to the new. After thirty six years of rule, Yudhishtira makes Parikshit the king and leaves for the Himalayas along with Draupadi and his brothers to undertake the final journey.



# A parent’s guide to gadget-free play

After schoolwork on a screen is done, how do you make sure your child is not back on one, playing video games? Parents share what works for them

**One day at a time**  
From gardening and art, to involving them in simple household chores, parents can seamlessly merge children in the adult world

AKILA KANNADASAN

“I just hate classes on the computer! My mother makes me sit in front of it all day. I can’t even see my friends on the screen properly.” This is a four-year-old’s rant. Apart from the economy, if there’s one other thing the pandemic has sent for a toss, it is our education system. Classes are all online now, including those for children as young as three. This comes with its own problems.

Dr Sowmya Bhaskaran TS, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at Coimbatore-based Insight Clinic, says, “Online classes for children

younger than six are not helpful.” However, she adds that her views on screen time are not the same as they were before the pandemic. “I do not view screens as ‘bad’ any more,” she says. But then, once classes are over, it helps to engage your child in something that does not involve gadgets. We asked parents to pitch in on how this can be done:

**Give life a rhythm**  
Madhu Karthik, who is based in Erode, believes in the Waldorf concept of ‘rhythm’ and making children feel responsible and developing a sense of belonging. She feels that today,

children miss the routine that school brings to life; the order a time-table offers. “I try and bring the same order at home by having fixed activities at stipulated times,” says the Waldorf educator and mother to a six-year-old.

These activities can be fixed according to your child’s age. “My son can wash utensils on his own; a younger child can help put the washed spoons inside the correct rack, for instance,” she says. “We also fold clothes together. A younger child can fold a to-

wel or handkerchief.”

The idea is to merge the child into the adult world seamlessly, so that it does not become a task for the parent.

**Take to fenugreek farming!**  
Urmila Sampath has two girls, aged 14 and nine. She says that after all the “unavoidable” screen time thanks to online classes, her girls turn to art for some succour. “They are into water colour painting and calligraphy too, and sometimes, we work on it together.”

The 40-year-old, who is based in Mumbai, has a kitchen garden, in which she grows mint, curry leaves, and fenugreek. “The girls water the plants and help me repot them when needed too,” she adds.

**Find joy in the everyday**  
Coimbatore-based Aarthi Bala-sundaram, a Montessori teacher, suggests an ‘object’ box with small things such as keys in it, that children can grab hold of. “We can ask them to pick up one item from the box, tell them what it’s called, and teach phonetics through the process,” she says.

Aarthi is a mother of two girls. She says that the focus should be on “life skills and sensorial activities”. She feels that a lot of learning happens through play,

and that parents need not look anywhere else for material to keep children engaged.

**Enter your teen’s world**  
Talking to teenagers can be tricky, more so at a time of uncertainty and recurring lockdowns. Chennai-based Deepa Packiyannath, who has twins aged 12, and a 17-year-old daughter, says that most teenagers crave a safe space to share their feelings openly. “All the hours spent online affects her; I ensure that I spend our morning tea time together, during which we chat about everything that interests her,” she says. And to get her daughter to open up, Deepa says she tries to be involved in her world. “She is into K-pop, and so I listen to it too, and ask her doubts here and there,” she adds. This leads to more conversations, and in the end, it’s a win-win for both parent and child.

**Embark on an adventure**  
K R Balathandapani runs an academy in Coimbatore that guides children in Science and Math. “My 10-year-old daughter sits through the sessions,” he says. “Sometimes, she runs away saying I’m repeating the same thing,” laughs the 50-year-old. Before the pandemic, Balathandapani regularly travelled on work – he works in sustainability – his daughter would accompany him. “Active parents, such as entrepreneurs, farmers, or the self-employed, can afford to take their children along with them on their work day so that the child can observe them,” he says. During lockdown, Balathandapani has been setting up kitchen gardens for people, and his daughter is right there, learning by seeing.

**Bubble fun**  
US-based Sindhuja Sandeep, mother of an active four-year-old, has long lists of activities to keep her son engaged through the day. “We melt crayons and put it in a cookie cutter to get new shapes,” she says. “I also give him a tub of water and some soap and he makes bubbles; I toss in some utensils and he pretends to wash them.” She adds that he makes play-dough of various colour combinations using food colour.

## COULD IT BE THAT...

# Yoga is being sexualised?



SUNALINI MATHEW

If you look at yoga search trends over the past five years in India, on Google Trends, (a dynamic matrix that tell us, in data terms, what people searched for online) the first three results were in Hindi. “Sexy yoga”, “Yoga sexy video”, and “yoga sex video” showed what Google calls “breakout” numbers, meaning it shot up by over 5000% compared to the previous five years.

How did yoga make the shift from spiritual practice to soft porn?

For starters, yoga has gone mainstream world over, and once something is seen as a potential money-spinner, capitalism will turn its greedy eye to it. Yoga was tagged onto the sports-meets-fashion industry, and marketing departments turned it into the ‘aspirational glamour’ segment, where young, slim, white women curved themselves into a vrischikasana, balancing themselves on their arms like it was the most natural thing to do. Women’s magazines promoted it as a means to sexual nirvana.

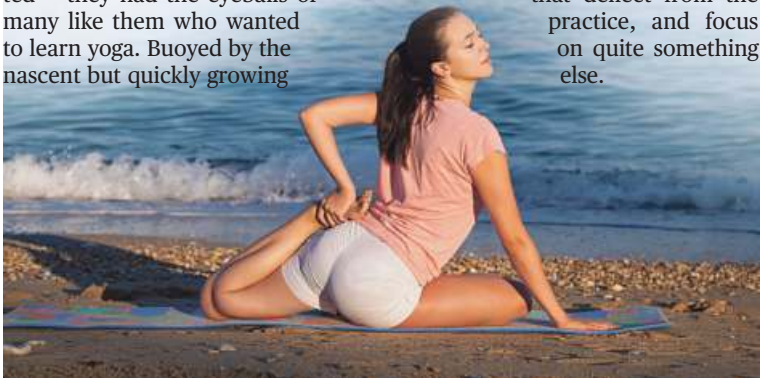
Much like the expensive, finished cotton clothes that we imported into India during British rule, made from the raw material we had supplied, we brought back yoga, in tights and sports bras – as a fitness habit and a weight-loss promise, abandoning the spiritual reason for its being. Entrepreneurial Indian women benefited – they had the eyeballs of many like them who wanted to learn yoga. Buoyed by the nascent but quickly growing

amateur sports industry, where runners were told to “also do yoga” and Yoga Day began to be promoted, it became a parallel business. The growth of social media influencers fuelled the ‘market’, where styling became all-important: soft light, an excellent background, beautiful bodies and clothes.

In their earlier avatar until about 10 years ago, yoga instructors in India, much like beauticians, would go from house to house, or building to building, teaching people how to go through a set of asanas. Now, this world was open to upper-middle-class women (men too, though like in the modelling world more women benefitted). Along with a knowledge of yoga, they also had urbanisation, education, feminism on their side, to be able to carve out a sometimes rough path for others after – yoga had, even 50 years ago, been male dominated. The rough path included nasty, sometimes lewd comments.

The nature of what can trigger sexual desire is nuanced, but there is something to be said about a) just seeing more women in a space they weren’t dominating, b) seeing the beauty of the human form suddenly ‘out there’ on social media, when we don’t see it in real life – on a road or even in most gyms. It is a reaction to a change in the culture of fitness; a generation of women now learning not just to accept, but to celebrate their bodies.

This search for yoga videos that titillate then, is a phase, until India gets used to seeing women revel in a sport in clothes that are comfortable and that show the form, as is often needed for yoga teachers. Until then, we’ll keep seeing searches that deflect from the practice, and focus on quite something else.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SELF

# We are warriors

The fear that we feel is real, yet let us not allow it to overstay in us



TT SRINATH

Several persons I know have either fallen ill owing to COVID-19 and some I know have suddenly passed on.

This pandemic and news we hear is telling me that the worst moments are going to roost here while all the good stuff seems to be crumbling.

So how and what may I do to get by, to wake up every morning and not feel the dread I have been experiencing?

One thing I am slowly yet surely learning is that overthinking tends to push me into worrying about the worst scenarios.

“The world is not stopping for my tragedy, it keeps moving and we have to move with it,” so I read somewhere and this is true.

A couple of days ago on a YouTube channel, a gentleman mentioned a gallant officer who died fighting it out alone. His motto was ‘the cavalry is not coming so I better take charge.’

Given all this I am telling myself that I have to shore up from within. I cannot let what is happening around me paralyse me.

We do not have to consider our fears as reminders that we are weak. Let us see them as proof of our keenness to be resilient, only

then can we drum up energy and the spirit to combat this foe that is chipping away at our confidence, our roots and our very being.

It is our fear of not being in control that is paralysing us. Fear that we feel is real, let us not fool ourselves, yet let us not allow it to overstay in us. Since we anyway cannot see the future why get excited or worried about it, let it just play itself out.

The only way I will douse fear is by facing it; just as a shadow diminishes in size and disappears as we walk towards it, so will my fear if I so act. Albert Camus the philosopher says, ‘there is winter around me, everything is cold and dying, yet in my heart there is an invincible summer.’

I sincerely hope this resonates with many of us.

The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at ttrsrinath@gmail.com



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

SOMA BASU

Somesh Singh, a former professor at NID Ahmedabad and the former Director of Institute of Apparel Management, declares that the Covest, a jacket he has designed, merges crafts with technology. The four-layer jacket is made using cotton printed Ajrakh (a block printing technique from Gujarat), and has various in-built capabilities to protect the wearer from infections outdoors.

It took him more than two months of research, trial, and error, before the prototype was finalised. Constructed with Cemi-Flex (cement fabric combining natural and synthetic material that looks like leather), the jacket is coated with Viroban-N9 SC100, an anti-bacterial and anti-viral textile finish. It is fitted with social distancing sensors, sanitisation pockets, a thermometer to measure the body temperature, and an in-built mask.

The Ajrakh is sourced from national-awardee Abdul Jabbar Khatri, a craftsman from Bhuj. Somesh is awaiting an ISO 45001 certification, after which the jacket will be available online, around September. Initially, it will be priced at ₹4,999 and available in sizes S, M, L and XL. Excerpts from an interview with Somesh, who is also an NIFT graduate and has worked with the Indian Army in the past to design warm clothing for soldiers posted in Siachen.

**How did the idea of the jacket occur to you?**

● Like many others I believed the novel coronavirus will go away in three weeks after lockdown I.O. But it didn’t. One day, I went out to fill petrol in my car and forgot the mask at home. After using the credit card for payment, I wondered how I could sanitise it, along with other personal belongings like car keys,



# Full tech jacket

This smart Ajrakh jacket comes with social distancing sensors, sanitisation pockets, a thermometer and an in-built mask

coins, kerchief, wrist watch, spectacles or sun glasses, mask, gloves and mobile phone. Over the next few days I read hundreds of articles to understand the nature of the virus and it be-

came clear that as part of new norms to effectively tackle the coronavirus, a person’s behaviour will have to be altered.

**How did you find the**

**For protection** Somesh Singh working on the Covest prototype • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**answer in combining crafts with technology?**

● As multiple doubts gave birth to ideas, I zeroed onto what is popularly known as smart clothing abroad, but not much known in our country. The best product I could think of was a garment-like jacket that could help to embed sensors in a 360 degree sphere to ensure the mandatory physical distancing, to fight COVID-19 in a mindful way. And handcrafting it would also mean jobs for craftspersons.



**How does fashion meet health in your product?**

● It is fashion moulded into functional health! For instance, the mask was never an accessory and wearing it is not our habit. But now the convertible collar of the jacket will not allow you to forget. Introducing Ajrakh print as a start will find quick acceptance in the market.

**What is the purpose of the jacket?**

● The jacket is not for treatment, but has been developed to check the contagion by incor-

porating different preventive features. It is important to build a culture of alertness through our dressing, just as we are working on immunity boosters, given a future vulnerable to infections.

**Could you describe the jacket?**

● The garment looks like any usual jacket but for its unique features such as a sensor fitted on the shoulders and the back that beep if you do not maintain the recommended distance of two metres with others on any side. A digital thermometer fitted in the front reads the body temperature on simple finger contact.

Three-layered 6x10 inch pockets are stitched in the front where all your personal belongings fit in for sanitisation in 30 seconds under UV light of 260 nanometre wavelength. The metal buttons are switches to operate the LED lights for the UV radiation and the seams act as circuits. When you open the pocket flap to take your things out, the radiation circuit gets cut.

**How does a person maintain the jacket?**

● It is regular daily wear, which you will need to dry clean preferably every fortnight. Remove the batteries before giving it. The mask is detachable for frequent home wash.

**Can the jacket be used in other situations?**

● Since this is a jacket made for the COVID-19 pandemic, the sensor range is two metres. It can be increased for visually challenged people for proximity alert, and women can be warned of stalkers. Bikers can prevent accidents with vehicles coming from behind. I also want to provide a fragrance finish to the jackets to reduce stress through aromatherapy.

From island-dwelling geckos to bats in Berlin, chiropterologist Rohit Chakravarthi shows how sound produced by different creatures can surprise you

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

Bat songs sound as delicate as birdsong, only it is far too loud for human ears. Geckos on the Andaman islands, on the other hand, have a sharp, yell-like call that can be heard by people from hundreds of metres away. You and I in the city, however, cannot hear them unless we follow chiropterologist Rohit Chakravarthi's recent social media posts.

"If you have been to an interpretation centre in a forest (in any national park), you can see the photo of an animal, press a button, and hear its call," says Rohit over phone from Nagpur.

His posts on Instagram are similar: press 'sound on' on the image of a pipistrelle bat and you will hear a slight, barely discernible cheep followed by a sudden string of twitterings that could easily have been mistaken for the chirp of a little bird had it lasted longer. Swipe to the photo of a European free-tailed bat, and the sound that greets you can only be described as the zaps of a miniature laser-gun – just like one a child mimics at play.

Another post features a solitary image of a tokay gecko – "a completely different genera from the garden lizards and *tiktiki* [house lizards] that we find in our



Clarion call  
A Common pipistrelle,  
(below) Rohit  
Chakravarthi ■ SPECIAL  
ARRANGEMENT AND ROHIT  
CHAKRAVARTHI

## As the gecko calls

homes", he says – whose short and abrupt call is startling and loud enough to cut through the whisper-like white noise of other nocturnal creatures that can be heard in the background. As Rohit puts it: "Some animals can't be reduced to photographs; they have to be felt with



more than one sense."

The sounds are diverse and captivating, but unfamiliar to most people. "With bats, the more appealing, social calls are heard much less. What you hear mostly are chirp-like sounds," says Rohit, adding, "There are tonnes of resources for

birdcalls, but for most animals and even mammals, records of calls are few and only available with researchers."

Rohit is not talking about exotic or far-flung creatures: take the common squirrel, for instance. "The squirrels that you hear in Bengaluru are a different species than the squirrels in Nagpur and further North. When birdwatchers first hear the sound of the squirrel here, they just can't believe it's coming from a squirrel. They assume it's a bird. Even these simple mammalian sounds are not well-known: there is no proper repository," he says.

His #animalsounds series is not an attempt to build this missing repository. It is partly to dispell a fresh wave of hatred against bats that have sprung up due to COVID-19 – "Bats living near cities and other human habitats are not the bat species that carry Coronavirus," he reiterates. But for the most part, it is "just a fun project to do at home". Not everyone has a stack of recordings built over years of fieldwork in different continents to sift through, but he points out that there are plenty of sounds to record within the lively confines of backyards.

"Lizards, squirrels, mice, shrews..." he believes recording them will be helpful in the long run. For instance: "Different cities have different noise levels, so some animals might inherently be communicating in a different way to be heard over city noise."

Backyard recordings of familiar creatures can help us understad this. "If different photographs of the same species come into the same platform, you can start looking at differences in colours across its geographical range. If you do it long-term, who knows, you might start finding trends like changes in habits due to environmental change. That same thing is also very likely with sound."



DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

At a time when darker and mature romantic comedies are favoured, the world of *The Kissing Booth* (2018) has an early 2000s romcom feel to it. Perhaps that is what drew German-born composer Patrick Kirst to the quirky project. Now, the film's sequel is out on Netflix and Patrick is thrilled to follow the young characters on their journeys.

Over Skype from his Los Angeles home, Patrick says he had focussed on

creating character themes as well besides the anthem for the film. "Throughout *The Kissing Booth 2*, I was able to develop these themes more emotionally because the story has matured with Elle and Noah in a long-distance relationship," he says.

With a long-distance relationship comes a lot of uncertainty and fear – both of which are strongly enveloped by love – and Patrick was mindful that the music reflects this. These moments, after all, were not so present in the first film.

Deeper connection Patrick Kirst (below) a still from *The Kissing Booth 2* ■ NETFLIX AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



"We are planting a lot of question marks in the movie, so we have to musically weave tension in and out accordingly," he adds.

Though the film features popular songs such as 'More' by The Eiffel or 'Build Me Up Buttercup' by The Foundations, Patrick's score can be heard during romantic montages or in a scene depicting emotional cross-roads. The composer enhances the emotion already present with strings overlaid to pull the viewer in deeper. "The film industry does this quite a bit, actually. It should come across as though the strings are part of the natural arrangement already," he says.

Recently, Netflix announced that *The Kissing Booth 3* too had been filmed be-

fore COVID-19 outbreak. "We are in the process of finessing the edit. The beginning few weeks, for me, is about procrastination. I just want to get it right because I'm very analytical," Patrick says, admitting that he had come on board the film series unsure of what to expect.

He was baffled when he saw a rough cut of the first film, but continued to work on compositions because he knew he was part of 'something special'.

"When I was travelling, I would converse with strangers and when I would say I worked on these films, they would get super excited and talk about how the film impacted them," he adds.

*The Kissing Booth 2* is streaming on Netflix

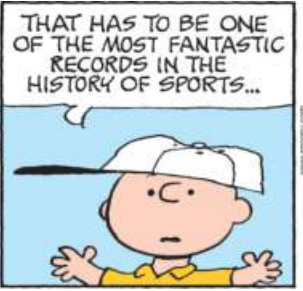
We are in the process of finessing the edit. I just want to get it right because I'm very analytical.

PATRICK KIRST  
Composer, on *The Kissing Booth 3*

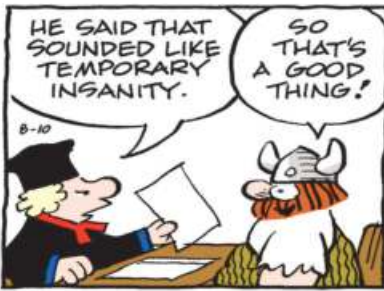
### POOCH CAFE



### PEANUTS



### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### TIGER



### PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



### HOMING IN

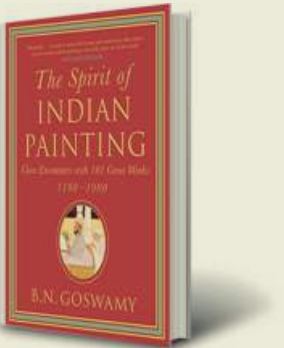


One has to be a good reader to feel different kinds of power, says dancer, writer and poet **Tishani Doshi**. So in her **Reading List**, she recommends a book on paintings, tales of war, and a play of poems

SOMA BASU

### The Spirit of Indian Painting by BN Goswamy

The urge with such a beautiful book is to consume it greedily, but the book suggests slowing down, to stay with one painting for a long time and find a way into it. For me, Goswamy reframed the relationship between the visual and the word, the performer and the receiver; by giving a name to instincts I had only wispy notions of, he linked me to a concrete study of aesthetics. With this book, I experienced a kind of transformation that was nothing short of magical.



### If This Is a Man by Primo Levi



Primo Levi's account of his year in Auschwitz – the complexity and complicity involved in surviving – drew me to this translated work since lockdown made me think about questions of survival. He shows us power structures, and how because these exist, you have "the drowned and the saved". We only need to look around to see these structures still exist.

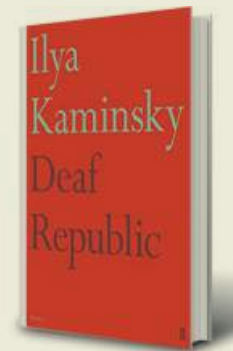
### The Little Virtues by Natalia Ginzburg

Written during the period after the Second World War, her essays move between the vocation of writing, domesticity, war, friendship and loss. They are autobiographical and political, keeping the most perfect balance at all times. Never sentimental, never cold, Natalia is a writer of great restraint, asking courageous moral questions, but also finding a way to draw circles around personal grief and loss.



### Deaf Republic by Ilya Kaminsky

I am interested in the individual's role in the collective, which leads me to this book of poems, or rather a play made up of stand alone poems. It opens in the town of Vasenka where soldiers kill a deaf boy, Petya, and the gunshot becomes the last thing the citizens hear. We meet characters as they live through this epidemic of deafness, learning sign language as a way of resistance. These poems are about silence and oppression and ways of countering violence.



We would love to know how you are keeping busy at home. Tell us what you are reading at metro@thehindu.co.in

# Loya jirga approves prisoner release

Of the 400 contentious Taliban militants to be freed, over 150 are on death row for serious crimes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KABUL

The Afghan government and the Taliban are “on the verge of peace talks” after thousands of prominent Afghans approved the release of about 400 contentious militant prisoners, the head of Kabul’s peace council said on Sunday.

The prisoners’ fate has been a crucial hurdle in launching peace talks between the two warring sides, which had committed to completing a prisoner exchange before negotiations can start.

### Three-day meeting

The resolution was passed at the end of a three-day “loya jirga” – a traditional Afghan meeting of tribal elders sometimes held to decide on controversial issues. “In order to remove the hurdles for the start of peace talks, stopping bloodshed, and for the good of the public, the jirga approves the release of 400 prisoners as demanded



**A difficult trade-off:** Afghan President Ashraf Ghani holding up the resolution on the last day of the Loya Jirga in Kabul on Sunday. • AP

by the Taliban,” jirga member Atefa Tayeb announced. According to an official list seen by AFP, many of the inmates are accused of serious offences, including many involved in attacks that killed scores of Afghans and foreigners, with more than 150 of them on death row.

The jirga urged the government to give assurances to the population that the released prisoners would be

monitored and would not be allowed to return to the battlefield, adding that foreign fighters should be sent back to their respective countries.

It also demanded a “serious, immediate and lasting ceasefire” in the country.

“The decision of the loya jirga has removed the last excuse and obstacles on the way to peace talks. We are on the verge of peace talks,” said Abdullah Abdullah, who

is leading the government’s peace process and was appointed head of the loya jirga. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said he would sign a decree to release the prisoners on Sunday. “The Taliban should now demonstrate that they are not afraid of a nationwide ceasefire,” he said. The Afghan government has released almost 5,000 Taliban inmates, but authorities had baulked at

freeing the final prisoners demanded by the Taliban.

### High-profile attacks

The prisoners include 44 insurgents of particular concern to the United States and other countries for their role in “high-profile” attacks. Five are linked to the 2018 attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul that killed 40 people, including 14 foreigners. A Taliban militant involved in the massive May 2017 truck bombing near the German embassy in Kabul is also on the list.

The family of French aid worker Bettina Goislard who was murdered in Afghanistan in 2003 said they would not accept the release of her killers, who are on the list. The decision has raised hopes for talks, however. “Based on the information I have, the intra-Afghan talks would begin within two to three days after the release of the 400 Taliban prisoners,” former President Hamid Karzai told the jirga.

# Brazil’s COVID-19 death toll crosses one lakh mark

It is the second-hardest hit country after the United States

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil on Saturday surpassed 1,00,000 COVID-19 deaths and three million cases of infection, crossing the grim milestone after President Jair Bolsonaro said he had a “clear conscience” on his response to the outbreak.

With 1,00,477 fatalities and 30,12,412 confirmed cases, the South American nation of 212 million people is the second hardest-hit country in the global pandemic, after the United States. The Health Ministry reported 905 new deaths in the past 24 hours, as well as 49,970 fresh cases. But the official figures are most likely an undercount, with experts estimating that the total number of infections could be up to six times higher due to insufficient testing.

Brazil has seen 478 deaths per million people, a figure roughly equivalent to that of the United States (487), but lower than that of Spain (609) or Italy (583).

### 4 days of mourning

Senate speaker Davi Alcolumbre announced four days of mourning in Congress to pay tribute to the country’s 1,00,000-plus virus victims.

The COVID-19 outbreak in Brazil is showing no sign of slowing as it enters its sixth month. The country’s first confirmed COVID-19 case was identified in Sao Paulo on February 26, with the first death on March 12, also in the city. Brazil marked 50,000 deaths a hundred days later, but then doubled that total in just half the time. Infections have accelerated in recent weeks in the countryside as well as inland



**Counting the dead:** A health union member in Sao Paulo, Brazil, holding a sign reading “Mourning for the 1,00,000 dead” during a tribute to the victims of the virus. • AFP

# Australia’s Victoria State reports new record

REUTERS  
SYDNEY

Australia’s second-most populous State, Victoria, reported its deadliest day of the COVID-19 outbreak on Sunday, with 17 people dying.

Victoria, at the centre of a second wave of infections in Australia, reported 394 cases of the virus in the past 24 hours, compared with a daily average of 400-500 over the past week. The new deaths

bring the State’s total to 210.

The southeastern State, with infections concentrated in Melbourne, accounts for a lion’s share of the national tally of more than 21,000 cases and 295 deaths.

The State has imposed a night curfew, tightened restrictions on people’s daily movements and ordered large parts of the economy to close.

# U.S. Health Secretary visits Taiwan, angering China

Alex Azar’s trip marks the highest level visit to the island by an American official since 1979

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TAIPEI

A senior member of U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration landed in Taiwan on Sunday for Washington’s highest level visit since switching diplomatic recognition to China in 1979, a trip Beijing has condemned.

During the three-day visit, Health Secretary Alex Azar will meet President Tsai Ingwen, who advocates Taiwan being recognised as a sovereign nation and is loathed

by China’s leaders. Ms. Tsai’s office said the meeting would take place on Monday morning.

Mr. Azar is the most senior U.S. Cabinet member to visit Taiwan in decades and his visit comes as relations between the world’s two biggest economic powers plunge to historic lows.

### Lessons on fighting virus

Washington has billed the Taiwan trip as an opportunity to learn from the island’s fight against the COVID-19

and to celebrate its progressive values. “This trip is a recognition of Taiwan’s success in combating COVID-19 and a testament to the shared beliefs that open and democratic societies are best equipped to combating disease threats like COVID-19,” a health and human services department official told reporters ahead of the visit.

But Beijing balks at any recognition of self-ruled Taiwan, which it claims as its own territory and vows to one day seize, by force if necessary.

It has described Mr. Azar’s visit as a threat to “peace and stability”, while China’s Defence Minister warned against Washington making any “dangerous moves”.

As well as meeting Ms. Tsai, Mr. Azar will hold talks with his counterpart Chen Shih-chung and Foreign Minister Joseph Wu. He will also meet COVID-19 experts and give a speech to public health students as well as alumni of a training programme with the U.S. Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention. Taiwan has become a poster child for defeating the COVID-19 thanks to a well-honed track and tracing programme as well as firm border controls.

Despite its proximity and economic links to China it has recorded fewer than 500 infections and seven deaths.

Under Mr. Trump, relations with Taiwan have warmed dramatically and he has approved a number of major military sales, including F-16 fighter jets.

## ELSEWHERE



### Kim orders distribution of aid to border city

SEOUL North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has ordered the distribution of aid to the border city of Kaesong after the area was locked down last month to fight the COVID-19, state media said Sunday. A train carrying goods arrived in the “totally blocked” city of Kaesong on Friday, the official KCNA news agency reported. • AFP

### Ship operator apologises for Mauritius oil leak

TOKYO The operator of a Japanese bulk carrier which ran aground off Mauritius apologised on Sunday for a major oil spill in Indian Ocean which officials and environmentalists say is creating an ecological disaster. The *MV Wakashio*, operated by Mitsui OSK Lines, struck the reef on Mauritius’s coast on July 25. • AFP

### 30 killed, 12 missing after floods in S. Korea

SEOUL Landslides and flooding triggered by days of heavy rain in South Korea have left at least 30 people dead and 12 missing, officials said on Sunday, warning of more downpours. Torrential rain has wreaked havoc across the country since the beginning of the month, but nearly half of the deaths occurred in the past three days, according to the Interior Ministry. • AFP

### New Zealand marks 100 days of no new cases

WELLINGTON New Zealand marked 100 days on Sunday with no recorded cases of the virus in the community but health officials warned there was no room for complacency. There are still 23 active cases but all were detected at the border when entering the country and are being held in isolation facilities. • AFP

# Trump signs order extending virus relief

Stimulus offers unemployment benefits

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEDMINSTER

U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday signed executive actions extending financial relief to Americans hit by the COVID-19 pandemic as polls showed a large majority of voters unhappy with his handling of the crisis.

The four measures marked a presidential show of strength after Mr. Trump’s Republican Party and White House team failed to agree with Opposition Democrats in Congress on a new stimulus package aimed at stopping vulnerable Americans from falling through the cracks.

Many Americans had been relying on relief measures approved earlier by Congress, but which mostly expired in July. Mr. Trump’s measures are likely to face

court challenges because Congress controls federal spending, and in any case they may add up to less money than initially appears.

One key Trump order promises to get \$400 a week added to Americans’ unemployment benefits, while two others offer some protection from evictions and relief for student loans.

The \$400 assistance is below the \$600 offered in the expired stimulus package. It may also end up amounting only to \$300 extra a week, because Mr. Trump said \$100 would be provided from State budgets – and only if States were able to do so.

A fourth measure ordered a freeze in payroll taxes. This makes a big headline for Mr. Trump but is only a deferral, rather than a cut in the tax.

# Mahinda Rajapaksa sworn in as Sri Lankan PM

This comes after his party secured a two-thirds majority in last week’s parliamentary election

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Sunday took the oath of office as Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, following the ruling party’s landslide victory in the August 5 general election. Mr. Rajapaksa, 74, polled a record-breaking share of preferential votes – over five lakh – this election, reflecting his popularity in the electorate 50 years after he first entered Parliament.

The swearing in ceremony was held at the Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara, at a revered Buddhist temple near Colombo, where his younger brother and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa administered the oath, after he bowed and took Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa’s blessings.

The emphatic two-thirds majority to the ruling party in the recent poll, after Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa’s big



**Massive mandate:** Mahinda Rajapaksa receiving appointment documents from his younger brother, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, in Colombo on Sunday. • AP

win in November, allows the Rajapaksa brothers to amend the Constitution. As part of their poll campaign, the brothers vowed to repeal a 2015 legislation capping presidency at two-terms and trimming the President’s executive powers. The ninth Parliament of Sri Lanka will not only see the siblings helm the country’s two most powerful offices, but will

have among its members, their third and elder brother Chamal Rajapaksa, a former Speaker, his son Shasheendra Rajapaksa and Namal Rajapaksa, son of Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa and a popular former MP from the southern Hambantota district.

### The Tamil question

Both the President and Prime Minister have under-

scored the need for greater development in the country’s civil war-affected areas, while the Tamil leadership is also concerned about the minority’s long-pending demand for greater political rights.

In the decade following the long civil war, Sri Lanka’s northern Tamils have been demanding a lasting political solution, with a greater measure of power to self-govern. R. Sampanthan, Leader of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) – which suffered an electoral setback and secured only 10 of its 16 seats this election – said the people of the country had given the government a strong mandate.

“It has the authority and power to do all that is necessary for the people. As far as we are concerned, we will extend to the government our fullest cooperation to everything done in national

interest and in the interest of solving the country’s problems,” he told The Hindu.

Much work has been done in the past, including the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 and the consequent 13th Amendment that speaks of power devolution, Mr. Sampanthan said. Discussions on improving the 13th Amendment continued with Presidents R. Premadasa, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Mahinda Rajapaksa in the past, and with the former government of Maithripala Sirisena-Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The new government, he said, must “evolve a formula without delay” for the resolution of the lingering national question. “I believe it will be part and parcel of the new Constitution being contemplated,” he told The Hindu.

The inaugural session of the new Parliament is scheduled for August 20.

# Lebanese protesters call for sustained uprising

Dozens injured in weekend demonstrations at Martyrs’ Square; Macron holds donors conference

REUTERS  
BEIRUT

Some Lebanese called on Sunday for a sustained uprising to topple their leaders amid public fury over last week’s devastating explosion in Beirut, and the country’s top Christian Maronite cleric said the Cabinet should resign. Meanwhile, hosting an emergency donors conference, French President Emmanuel Macron said world powers must put aside their differences and support the Lebanese people, whose country’s future is at stake.

“Despite differences in view, everyone must come to the help of Lebanon and its people,” he said via video-link from his summer retreat on the French Riviera. “Our task today is to act swiftly and efficiently.”

Mr. Macron visited Beirut on Thursday, the first world



**Anger on the streets:** A Lebanese protester waving the national flag in Beirut on Saturday. • AFP

leader to do so after the explosion, and promised humanitarian aid would come but that profound political reform was needed to resolve the country’s problems and secure longer term support.

Protesters have called on the government to quit over what they say was negligence that led to Tuesday’s

explosion. Anger boiled over into violence scenes in central Beirut on Saturday.

### ‘Cabinet should resign’

Christian Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rai said the Cabinet should resign if it cannot “change the way it governs”. “The resignation of an MP or a Minister is not enough (..) the whole go-

vernment should resign if it is unable to help the country recover,” he said in his Sunday sermon.

Information Minister Manal Abdel Samad said she was resigning on Sunday, citing the explosion and the failure of the government to carry out reforms.

Dozens of people were injured in Saturday’s protests, the biggest since October when thousands of people took to the streets in protests against corruption, bad governance and mismanagement. About 10,000 people gathered at Martyrs’ Square, which was transformed into a battle zone in the evening between police and protesters who tried to break down a barrier along a road leading to Parliament.

Some demonstrators stormed government Ministries and the Association of Lebanese Banks. Demon-

strators defied dozens of tear-gas canisters fired at them and hurled stones and firecrackers at riot police, some of whom were carried away to ambulances. One policeman was killed. The Red Cross said it had treated 117 people for injuries on the scene on Saturday while another 55 were taken to hospital.

Soldiers in vehicles mounted with machine guns were stationed beside Martyrs’ Square on Sunday. “People should sleep in the streets and demonstrate against the government until it falls,” said lawyer Maya Habi.

The explosion killed 158 people and injured more than 6,000, destroying parts of the city and compounding months of political and economic meltdown. Twenty-one people were still reported as missing.

# Belarus strongman faces stiff challenge

Lukashenko has ruled since 1994

REUTERS  
MINSK

Belarus voted in an election on Sunday pitting President Alexander Lukashenko against a former teacher who emerged from obscurity to lead the biggest challenge in years against the man who has ruled the country for a quarter of a century, since 1994.

Mr. Lukashenko, 65 is almost certain to win a sixth consecutive term but could face a new wave of protests amid anger over his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy and his human rights record.

He faces a surprise rival in Svetlana Tikhonouskaya, a former English teacher who entered the race after her husband, an anti-government blogger who intended to run, was jailed.



A woman reading a ballot before casting her vote in Belarus on Sunday. • REUTERS

In possible anticipation of unrest, local media reported squares being blocked off by the authorities in Minsk and the presence of some soldiers on the capital’s outskirts. Social media networks experienced disruption. Queues also formed outside the Belarusian embassies in Moscow and Kiev for voters casting their ballot abroad.

ASK US



K. NITYA KALYANI
Q. Suppose I decide to buy an online term insurance plan of a life insurance company, is it possible for me to buy the same through an agent of a life insurance company or should I apply for it on my own through online only?

V. SUBRAMANIAN
A. Agents and websites (of the insurance company itself or of an insurance web aggregator) are two different distribution channels for insurance. You have the option of using either of these by submitting your proposal form and paying your premium through them. So, when it comes to the purchase transaction, they are mutually exclusive.

The insurance company will have independent sales commission arrangements with differing intermediaries (and, usually, a premium discount if you buy from the company website directly).

Some products are designated to be sold only online and, conversely, all products will not be available online.

A classic purchase strategy of customers of other goods and services has been to research online and buy offline.

This combines the benefits of extensive product information material across companies and products. In addition, you can research on third-party websites also. This much information would not be as easily available from an individual sales person.

Going to an agent after you do your research will help you take your purchase forward with better clarity of what you want and what is available where.

Also, once an agent is in the picture, you get to buy only the products offered by the companies he represents. For information, an insurance agent can represent one life insurer, one non-life insurer and one standalone health insurer.

Health insurance for parents

Q. I am 27 years old. My mother and father are 51 and 61, respectively. My company provides a family floater health insurance, that includes parents, covering up to ₹5 lakh. I want to opt for additional health insurance for them.

What else do I need to consider for health insurance and how will this be useful in my tax savings?

ABINASH PATTJOSHI

A. Additional cover is always wise, and the sooner the better as you will not have too many exclusions in the form of pre-existing conditions and, if so, your waiting period clock can start ticking and you can become eligible for coverage benefits.

Please make an assessment of what likely illnesses they may face and how much treatment for it costs where you live. This will give you an indication of the sum insured you need.

Also check the option of keeping your employment cover as the basic hospitalisation cover and opt for buying a top-up or a super top-up cover as that is a more cost-effective way of increasing cover.

Your tax break on premium for parents will be as per the latest provisions of Section 80D of the Income-Tax Act, 1961, which is currently ₹25,000 (₹50,000 if either of the parents is a senior citizen).

Remember, this is only if they are dependent on you.
(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance and corporate history)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

MIND YOUR MONEY

Saving for a GOAL

Start a systematic investment plan with a special financial objective as it will bring a sense of direction to investments

GAURAV MASHRUWALA
On a live TV show, Roshan from Pune called. His query was, should a SIP, in which a sum of ₹5,000 is invested monthly, be continued with or stopped.
In response, he was asked about the financial goal for which this particular SIP was started. There was no specific answer.
Many a time, we start an SIP -

Systematic Investment Plan - without linking it with any specific financial goal.

SIPs are a way for individuals to invest a fixed, pre-decided amount of money into a mutual fund scheme at pre-defined intervals, usually every month.

Most of the time, SIPs are started without any intention to fulfil any particular financial goal. This has limited benefits, in the sense that regular investing is a good habit and to that extent, starting an SIP is a good decision. However, if it is linked to our specific financial goals, it becomes much more useful.

There are various financial goals we have to fulfil in life and for



IMAGING: J.A. PREMKUMAR

THINK INVESTOR

Do your systematic investments need a pause?

Investment Recess allows an individual facing salary cuts to ease COVID-19-related pressure on cash flows

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

If your income has declined this year as a fallout of COVID-19, you may be under pressure to manage your cash flows. In this article, we discuss why you should consider taking an Investment Recess to reduce the pressure on your cash flows.

Investment Recess is a temporary period - typically one year - where you stop your systematic investments earmarked for achieving your life goals.

Suppose you have been saving ₹20,000 every month till your income was affected because of the COVID-19-related lockdown.

You have to either cut your current consumption to continue saving ₹20,000 or reduce your savings to maintain your current consumption.

As humans, we suffer from present bias. We prefer instant gratification to deriving greater happiness in the future. So, consuming now is much better

than saving today to spend in the future! But you have to save to achieve your life goals such as buying a house or funding child's college education.

So, what should you do? It is difficult to cut non-discretionary expenses. This refers to essential expenses needed to run your household such as groceries and utility bills.

Also, you may want to spend some money on discretionary expenses (take-away dining, for instance) to reduce your emotional stress. That leaves you with little choice but to cut your monthly savings, leading to an Investment Recess.

You should take an Investment Recess on all systematic investments in equity mutual funds. This is required to ensure that your investments do not add to your already-high cash-flow volatility arising from unstable income.

For the same reason, you should also liquidate your exist-



Tough choice: With incomes declining due to lockdowns, individuals are under pressure to manage cash flows. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

ing equity investments.

RD no exception

You should, if required, also take an Investment Recess on recurring deposit (RD) earmarked for achieving any life goal, except your high-priority goal. A high-priority goal is one that you cannot postpone -

your child's college education fund, for instance.

Note that banks may charge a penalty if you fail to deposit money into your RD on the agreed date every month. An alternative will be to continue with your RD and use fixed deposits (FDs) to ease the pressure on your cash flows. The

flip side is that lump sum money in your FDs will provide more emotional comfort than continually building your investments through RD. The choice between taking an Investment Recess on RD and breaking a FD should depend on associated penalties.

You should also work with your bank to explore the possibility of converting the money accumulated in your RD into a FD at a lower interest rate to reduce penalty charges.

These are unprecedented times. And such situations may force you to work against your best judgment, especially because pressure on cash flows is salient. One way to lower your emotional stress arising from cash flow pressure is to transfer some of your existing FD to your savings account.

Having normal balance in the savings account is one way to cheat your brain into thinking your cash flow levels are

comfortable. Of course, moving money from an FD to a savings account will reduce interest income. Also, taking an Investment Recess will hurt life goals. But you are justified in being present-biased when your cash flows are under pressure.

So, your roadmap to reducing your cash flow pressure is as follows: First, take an Investment Recess on all equity investments. Second, liquidate all your existing equity investments and place the sale proceeds in monthly-income bank deposits. The periodic interest income can reduce the cash-flow gap arising from a salary cut. Third, take an Investment Recess on RDs or break your existing FDs depending on the penalties. As the last resort, use fixed assets as collateral to borrow money.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Tell me again? The money we put in stocks is considered as what? Savings or expenditure?"

Table with Bank Fixed Deposit Rates. Columns: Bank Name, Interest Rates (%) for Highest Slab, 1-year tenure, 3-year tenure, 5-year tenure. Rows include Small Finance Banks, Private Sector Banks, Public Sector Banks, and Foreign Banks.

Table with Home loan interest rates. Columns: Name of Lender, Loan Amount (Rs.) for Upto 30 lakh, Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh, Above 75 lakh. Rows include Public Sector Banks, Private Sector Banks, and Housing Finance Companies (HFCs).

TV PICKS

**NBA:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 4 a.m. (Tuesday)  
**Europa League:** Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

IN BRIEF



**Stokes to miss rest of Pakistan Test series**  
MANCHESTER  
England allrounder Ben Stokes will miss the remainder of the ongoing Test series against Pakistan for family reasons, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced on Sunday. "Stokes will leave the UK later this week and travel to New Zealand," said an ECB statement.



**Doncic on a roll as Mavericks pip Bucks**  
MIAMI  
Luka Doncic scored 36 points in his NBA-leading 17th triple-double and Dallas Mavericks scored the last seven points of regulation to force overtime, going on to a 136-132 win over Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday. **Other results:** Denver Nuggets bt Utah Jazz 134-132; Los Angeles Clippers bt Portland Trail Blazers 122-117; Phoenix Suns bt Miami Heat 119-112; Indiana Pacers bt LA Lakers 116-111. **AP**

**Ko surges clear at LPGA Marathon Classic**  
WASHINGTON  
A late flurry of birdies left Lydia Ko with a four-shot lead at the LPGA Marathon Classic on Saturday. The 23-year-old New Zealand star carded a three-under 68 and moved to 16-under. Danielle Kang is second with 12-under. **AFP**



**Juventus appoints Pirlo as new coach**  
TURIN  
Serie A champion Juventus named former midfielder Andrea Pirlo as the new coach on Saturday, giving him his first senior managerial role. Pirlo was a World Cup winner with Italy in 2006. **REUTERS**



**Rookie Brad Binder claims Czech MotoGP**  
BRNO  
Brad Binder (KTM) won the Czech MotoGP on Sunday, ahead of Franco Morbidelli (Yamaha-SRT) and Johan Zarco (Ducati-Avintia). It was the 24-year-old's first win in his third race and the first victory at the elite level by a South African and for the KTM team. Fabio Quartararo (Yamaha-SRT), winner of the first two rounds and championship leader, finished seventh. **AFP**

Manitombi passes away at the age of 39

Former India and Mohun Bagan footballer succumbs to illness



Manitombi Singh. **FILE PHOTO**

Messi inspires Barcelona into last eight

Lewandowski excels as Bayern Munich overwhelms Chelsea to set up a meeting with the Catalans

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

**REUTERS**  
BARCELONA  
A fired-up Lionel Messi led Barcelona to a 3-1 win at home to Napoli on Saturday for a 4-2 aggregate victory which took the club into the Champions League quarter-finals for the 13th consecutive season, where it will face Bayern Munich.  
Robert Lewandowski struck twice as Bayern cruised past Chelsea 4-1, for a 7-1 aggregate victory, and remains on course for a treble of titles.

**Superb strike**  
The Catalans had a shaky start but took the lead in the 10th minute with a powerful header from a corner by Clement Lenglet before Messi scored a superb second in the 23rd, seeing off four defenders to curl the ball into the far bottom corner.  
Messi had the ball in the net again soon after, follow-

ing a superb team move, but the Argentine's goal was harshly ruled out for hand-ball after a VAR review. But Messi later won a penalty which Luis Suarez converted.  
Napoli got one back when Lorenzo Insigne converted a spot kick at the end of the first half and was the better side after the interval but Barca survived to set up a mouth-watering clash with Bayern next Friday.  
Meanwhile in Munich, the Bavarians went two up through Lewandowski penalty and Ivan Perisic before Tammy Abraham pulled one back for Chelsea. Corentin Tolisso and Lewandowski completed the rout.  
**The results:** Bayern Munich 4 (Lewandowski 10-pen, 83, Perisic 24, Tolisso 76) bt Chelsea 1 (Abraham 44). *Bayern 7-1 on aggregate.*  
Barcelona 3 (Lenglet 10, Messi 23, Suarez 45+1-pen) bt Napoli 1 (Insigne 45+5-pen). *Barcelona 4-2 on aggregate.*

Champions League in numbers

**3** Barcelona, Bayern and Manchester City have remained unbeaten in this edition. Bayern has won all its eight matches, City six (two draws) and Barcelona five (three draws)

**7** Goals conceded by Chelsea in two legs against Bayern, the first time it has conceded as many in two-legged European ties. It is also the second-highest aggregate reverse for an English team after Arsenal was thrashed 10-2 over two legs by Bayern in 2016-17

**10** Bayern and Barcelona have won 10 trophies between them (five each), and are the only remaining sides in this year's tournament to have clinched the trophy. The other six teams are yet to claim the title

**13** Lewandowski's goals this season, putting him four short of the all-time record (in a single campaign) held by Ronaldo (17, 2013-14)

**13** Barcelona has reached the last eight for the last 13 seasons, failing to do so in 2006/07 under Frank Rijkaard. No other team has made it to this stage more than eight consecutive times

**35** Number of opponents Messi has scored against in the Champions League after netting against Napoli, the most by a player in the tournament's history. Ronaldo and Raul have scored against 33 teams

**THE QUARTERFINAL MATCH-UPS:**  
**Aug. 13:** Atalanta vs PSG  
**Aug. 14:** RB Leipzig vs Atletico Madrid  
**Aug. 15:** Barcelona vs Bayern Munich  
**Aug. 16:** Lyon vs Manchester City  
*All matches begin at 12.30 a.m. IST*

COMPILED BY ANANTAAJITH RA

Johnson gets his nose in front

Koepka in striking distance; Woods sees his chances fading

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
SAN FRANCISCO  
Dustin Johnson shot a 65 on Saturday to put himself on course for another mouth-watering final-round showdown at a PGA Championship with two-time defending champion Brooks Koepka.  
Johnson and Koepka are no strangers at the PGA Championship as Johnson nearly chased down Koepka in the final round last year at New York's Bethpage Black before losing by two shots.



**What's it this time?** Dustin Johnson's eighth straight round in the 60s in a PGA championship took him to the top. **AFP**

**One-shot lead**  
Johnson's five-under 65 on Saturday got him to nine under for the tournament and a one-shot lead over fellow Americans Scottie Scheffler and Cameron Champ.  
History-chasing American Koepka is tied for fourth with two others, just two strokes behind the long-hitting Johnson.  
Johnson's 65 was his eighth straight round in the 60s at a PGA Championship. His eight birdies are the

most he has made in any round of a Major, bettering the seven he made at the 2017 PGA Championship and the 2014 British Open.  
But his results have been mixed in 2020 as he missed the cut at the Memorial, withdrew from the 3M Open with a bad back after an opening 78 and finished 12th at the WGC event in Memphis.  
Third-round leader Li Haotong of China shot a 73 and, like Koepka, struggled on the par-4 13th, making a double bogey. But Li never

recovered from that and made two more bogeys and finished on 205.  
**Tiger in the woods**  
Tiger Woods saw his chances all but extinguished as he struggled on the greens and shot a 72. He is tied for 59th at 212, 11 behind Johnson.  
**The scores:** **201:** Dustin Johnson (USA) 69, 67, 65; **202:** Scottie Scheffler (USA) 66, 71, 65, Cameron Champ (USA) 71, 64, 67; **203:** Brooks Koepka (USA) 66, 68, 69, Collin Morikawa (USA) 69, 69, 65, Paul Casey (Eng) 68, 67, 68.

Equestrian federation running out of time, excuses

It has been battling court cases challenging its governance and election of office-bearers

**RAKESH RAO**  
NEW DELHI  
Having repeatedly failed to set its house in order, the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) is fast running out of time.  
**Tough questions**  
Following the recent Delhi High Court order dismissing the EFI's twin-plea, the governing body may have to answer some tough questions when the case comes up for hearing on September 24.  
Alongside its reluctance to comply with the 2011 National Sports Development Code, the EFI has been bat-

tlng court cases challenging its governance and election of office-bearers.  
The EFI's questionable practice of appointing the current Quartermaster-General (QMG) as the EFI president saw Lt. Gen. R. Gopal hold the post the day he was made a member of the EFI, last September. On retirement as the QMG on May 31, 2020, he resigned immediately as the EFI president.  
When Lt. Gen. S.S. Mishra took over as the new QMG, he was made a member of the EFI on 17 May, 2020, and nominated as the president in June. The other contentious appointment was that

of Lt. Gen. M.K.S. Yadav as the vice-president (admin), to run the affairs of the EFI till elections were held.  
Last month, the Rajasthan Equestrian Association (REA) moved the Delhi High Court challenging these nominations.  
The Court, in its order dated July 20, 2020, restrained the two nominated members from acting in the interim capacity.  
The REA also argued that these nominations were based entirely on the ranks in the army and therefore detrimental to equestrian sport in the country. The REA requested the Court to

Verstappen snaps Mercedes' streak

Hamilton finishes second, equals Schumacher's record of podium finishes

70TH ANNIV. GP

**REUTERS**  
SILVERSTONE  
Red Bull's Max Verstappen won Formula One's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix on Sunday to end Mercedes' run and become Lewis Hamilton's closest challenger.  
In a race dominated by tyres and strategy, Hamilton swept past Mercedes teammate and pole sitter Valtteri Bottas to take second place late in the race and stay 30 points clear in the standings.  
Hamilton, who gained an extra point for the fastest lap, also equalled Michael Schumacher's record of 155 career podium finishes.

Fast Facts

- Red Bull's first win at Silverstone since 2012
- This is Verstappen's ninth career victory
- He is the first non-Mercedes driver to win a race in 2020
- The last five times a P4 driver has won a race has been from Red Bull
- Hamilton equals Schumacher's 155 podiums record
- Vettel's worst start to a season since 2008 at Toro Rosso

**Maximum impact:** In a race dominated by tyres and strategy, it was Verstappen who had the final say. **REUTERS**



COMPILED BY ANIRUDH VELAMURI

**Ninth win**  
"I didn't see it coming, but after the first stint it seemed like we were really good on tyres," said Verstappen as he celebrated his ninth win that left him with 77 points to Hamilton's 107.  
Mercedes had won the four previous races, and taken every pole, but Verstappen was alone among the top 10 on the grid to start on

the hard tyres and it paid off.  
"We haven't really had an opportunity in all the races so far to push them and I could see we were pushing them. I tried to put the pressure on, they had to pit, I did my own pace," said Verstappen.  
Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was fourth, ahead of Red Bull's Alexander Albon and the Racing Points of Lance

Stroll and Nico Hulkenberg.  
**The results:** 1. Verstappen (Red Bull) 1:19:41.993s, 2. Hamilton (Mercedes) +11.326, 3. Bottas (Mercedes) 19.231, 4. Leclerc (Ferrari) 29.289, 5. Albon (Red Bull) 39.146, 6. Stroll (Racing Point) 42.538, 7. Hulkenberg (Racing Point) 55.951, 8. Ocon (Renault) 1:04.773, 9. Norris (McLaren) 1:05.544, 10. Kvyat (Alpha Tauri) 1:09.669.  
11. Gasly (Alpha Tauri) 1:10.642, Vettel (Ferrari) 1:13.370, 13. Sainz Jr. (McLaren) 1:14.070;  
**+1 lap:** 14. Ricciardo (Renault), 15. Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo), 16. Grosjean (Haas), 17. Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo), 18. Russell (Williams), 19. Latifi (Williams).  
**DNF:** 20. Magnussen (Haas).  
**Standings: Drivers:** 1. Hamilton 107, 2. Verstappen 77, 3. Bottas 73, 4. Leclerc 45, 5. Norris 38.  
**Constructors:** 1. Mercedes 180, 2. Red Bull 113, 3. Ferrari 55, 4. McLaren 53, 5. Racing Point 41.

Carrom presents a strong case for Arjuna award



Rashmi Kumari.



S. Appoorwa.

**KAMESH SRINIVASAN**  
NEW DELHI  
It is one game that roared back to life during the pandemic, in almost every household, irrespective of economic status. Carrom binds the nation, as a truly indigenous game for the masses, simple and affordable.  
However, except for two-time World Champion Maria Irudayam's Arjuna award in 1996, the fraternity has not been able to get recognition. This time around, there are five applications from carrom for the Arjuna – Kajal Kumari, Prashant More, S. Appoorwa, Rashmi Kumari and Yogesh Pardeshi.  
Each of them has been a world champion or won a global competition. In fact, Kajal Kumari, the Indian Oil officer from Mumbai, won a Swiss League in the World Cup in Korea (2018) in a combined field of men and women.  
The record of the 37-year-old Rashmi Kumari, the ONGC officer in Delhi, is most enviable, for she has won two World Championship

and two World Cup gold medals. She has also been national women's singles champion ten times, from 2004, bettering Maria Irudayam's record of nine. One of those came in the eighth month of her pregnancy.  
Quite remarkably, she has won 100 international medals, including 89 gold, at the Asian, SAARC and global levels. She made the Indian team when she was 15 in 1998, and continues to serve the nation with distinction.  
Since the inception of the Arjuna award in 1961, athletics, with 93 awardees, leads the list, followed by hockey (88), cricket (54), wrestling (53), shooting (47), boxing (41), weightlifting (37), kabaddi (36), badminton (32), table tennis (29), football (26), volleyball (25), swimming (22) and golf (20).  
Even compared to billiards and snooker, a sophisticated version of carrom with 17 awardees, kho kho (13), ball badminton (6), bodybuilding (5), wushu (4) and roller skating (2), carrom looks to have lost out.

Ding stuns Carlsen

Dubov punishes Nakamura, takes lead

**RAKESH RAO**  
NEW DELHI  
A composed Ding Liren produced a late masterclass to stun Magnus Carlsen, after an alert Daniil Dubov punished Hikaru Nakamura in just 17 moves, in the opening game of the first set of semifinals of the \$300,000 Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour Finals on Sunday.  
Carlsen slowly lost the plot after Ding kept up the pressure with white pieces.  
The gradual squeeze by Ding saw him create an opening from the queen's side, forcing the World champion to give up a pawn.

After the exchange of queens, Ding enlarged his advantage with some accurate continuation and forced Carlsen to resign.  
Dubov, a former World rapid champion, gained almost decisively by Nakamura's questionable choice of capturing a central-pawn with a knight, instead of queen, on the 10th move.  
Nakamura immediately got into serious trouble. The Russian quickly launched a decisive offensive on black's castled king.  
A hapless Nakamura spotted an inevitable checkmate and resigned, in just 17 minutes.